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Fall 88

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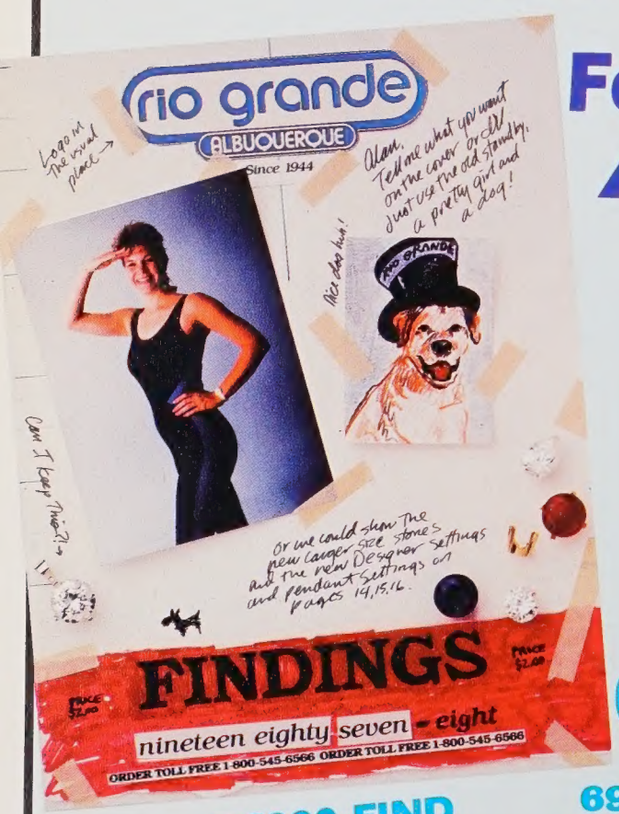

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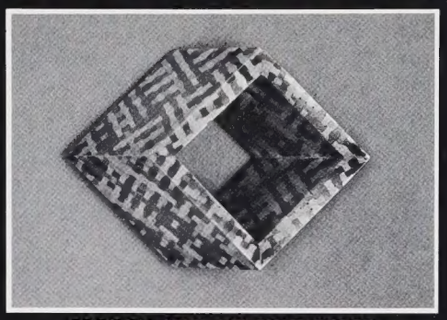

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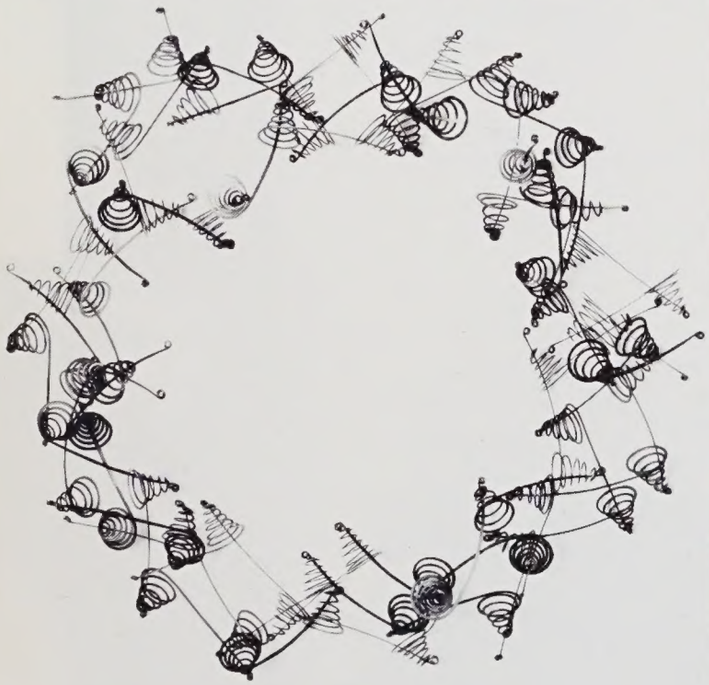

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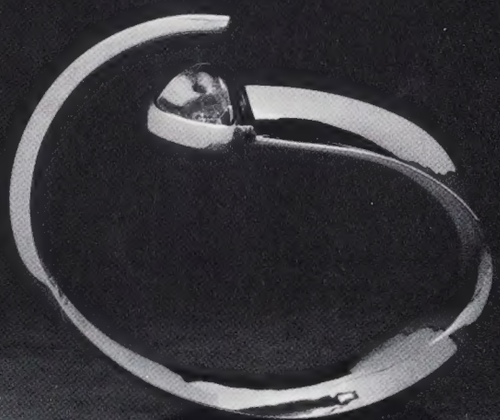

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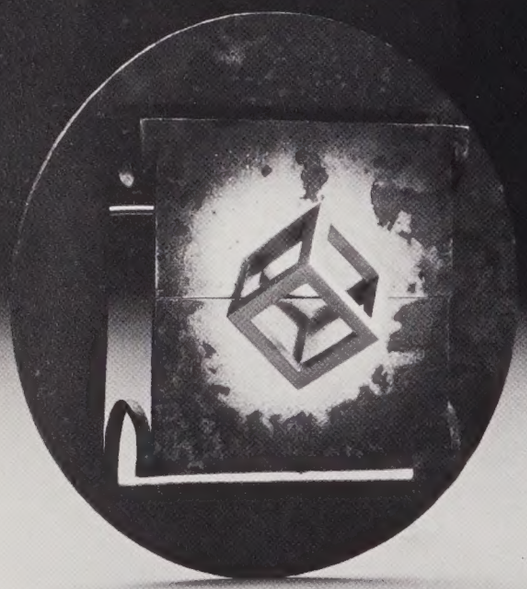

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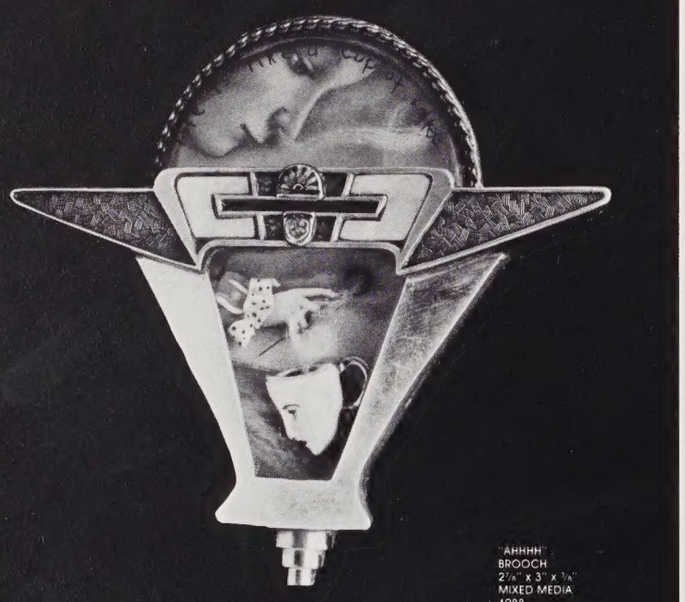

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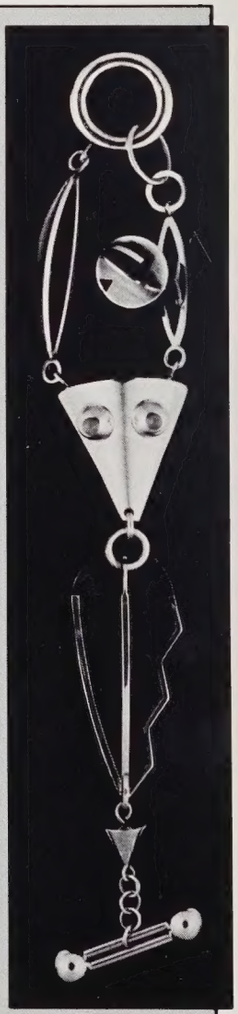

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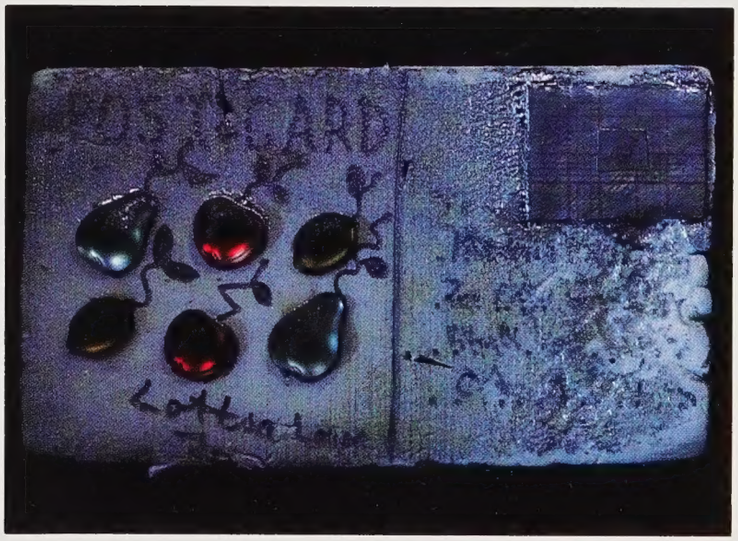

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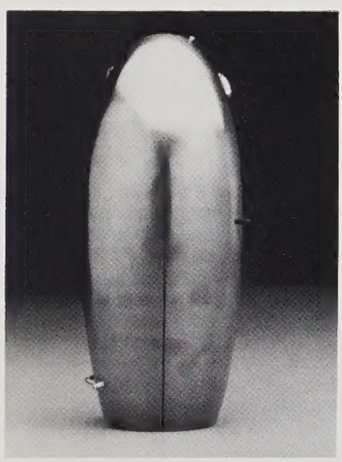

Cover: Tom Muir, *Figure Vessel*, copper, nickel, sterling silver, steel and stainless steel, 11 x 4 x 5", 1986. Photo: Rob Wheless; **above:** *Figure Vessel*, back view. See page 24
Top: John Prip, *Lottsa Love* mail art sent to Louis Mueller. See page 14; **right:** *Ipswich Torcs* (detail). Photos courtesy British Museum

Editorial

It's bad enough. When as independent craftpeople we struggle to make ends meet as second-class citizens in the art market, the government wants to pull the strings on our financial safety net. It's bad enough. When as studio jewelers we have been trying for so long to convince the public that we are *at least* a cut above the gold merchants, we now have to convince the IRS that we're not a cottage industry nor black-market tax evaders. With some urgency, we yield the editorial column to Jill Slosburg-Ackerman, who has taken up the cause of taxation without our representation.

Back in the old days when art was art, we were able to deduct our legitimate expenses of supplies, materials, studio rent, etc. in order to gain some relief and encouragement for doing cultural work that does not sell, or sell well enough. Although we hope that some day we will reap the fruits of our labors in monetary terms, for now our viewing public generally benefits more than our tax returns show. However, the 1986 Tax Reform Act, which went into effect beginning in the tax year 1987, takes a radical turn in how the government looks upon the artist's value. The act requires that artists capitalize their expenses. Under capitalization accounting, the artist must estimate the expenses that go into each work of art and then deduct that amount when the work is sold. If the work is not sold, no deduction can be taken. For example, when you sell a ring, then, and only then, can you deduct the cost of making that ring. You must estimate and limit your deductions to the cost of the material in that ring, the hours spent in its production, the electricity used for the buffing machine, the amount of solder, calculated joint-by-joint.

Understandably, there was an outcry from the art community in response to this Act. Art, as everyone knows, except the IRS, is not a manufacturing enterprise; it is not price-sensitive and does not abide by cost-efficiency accounting. The IRS responded to these protests by offering what they called the "safe harbour rule." Under this rule, a producer of a creative work (but not a jeweler—jewelers are actually excluded from this rule!) may lump together all the "qualified creative costs" he or she incurs during a year and deduct 50% during the year they are incurred, and 25% each year for the two subsequent years. A cosmetic approach, at best, the safe harbour rule does not hide the surgical effects of bleeding greater tax revenues from an already unprofitable activity. Very few artists expect to recover their expenses, let alone make a profit every three years.

In our defense, Artists for Tax Equity, a national organization, has been lobbying against the Tax Reform Act. Currently they support a bill in Congress (Downey Bill HR 4473) that purposes to exempt artists from the capitalization clause of the Tax Reform Act. As of this writing, the bill has been passed by the House of Representatives, and a similar bill has been introduced in the Senate, with anticipated passage in September 1988.

The problem for us with the Downey Bill is that the term artist is defined as "any individual, if the personal efforts of such individual create (or may reasonably to be expected to create) a picture, painting, sculpture, statue, etching, drawing, cartoon, graphic design or original print edition." I don't have to tell you that this narrow reading of the term "artist" leaves out a significant portion of the community, from environmental artists to craftsmen. Further, the wording supports an insidious allusion that artistic activity always produces an object—a "picture, painting, sculpture or statue" that can be directly validated by a "market." Our spiritual ancestors, those stolid Greek democrats, would probably turn over in their graves upon hearing art so callously circumscribed.

Artists for Tax Equity recommends that after the Downey Bill has passed, the next campaign should be to amend the bill with a broader definition of "artist" to extend the scope of its protection. You can and should participate in this effort by writing your Congressman and Senator and sending copies to the Artists for Tax Equity, 8th floor, 11 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011.

The issues are clear:
1. Art is not defined by commodity markets but by the activities of individuals engaged in beneficial cultural production.
2. Creativity should be encouraged and applauded by government, not squelched by the punitive laws of the Tax Reform Act.
3. The attrition of artists as a result of capitalization will take a greater toll on our democratic culture than the pennies saved in the cause of fiscal austerity.

Further reading: "Artists Fear Impact of Curb on Tax Writeoffs" by Douglas C. McGill, The New York Times, April 7, 1988; "Simplified Capitalization Rules for Artists, Authors, Photographers," Tax Week, May 20, 1988.

Metalsmith

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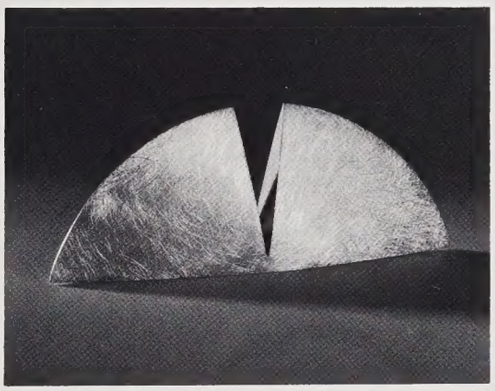

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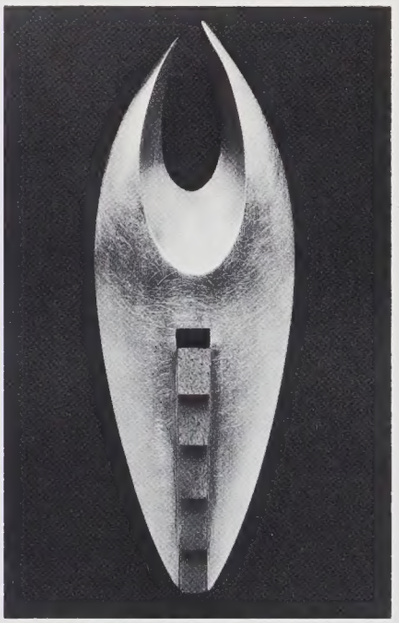

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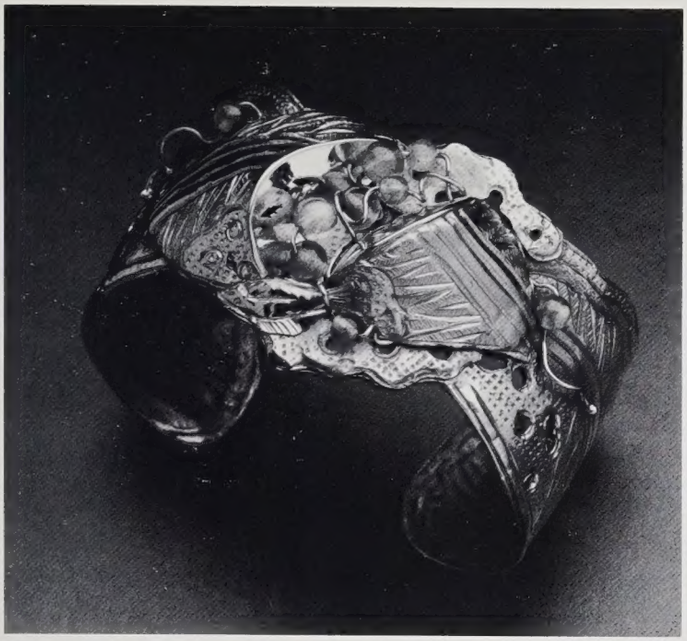

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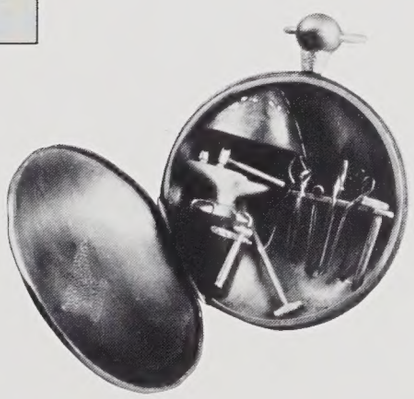

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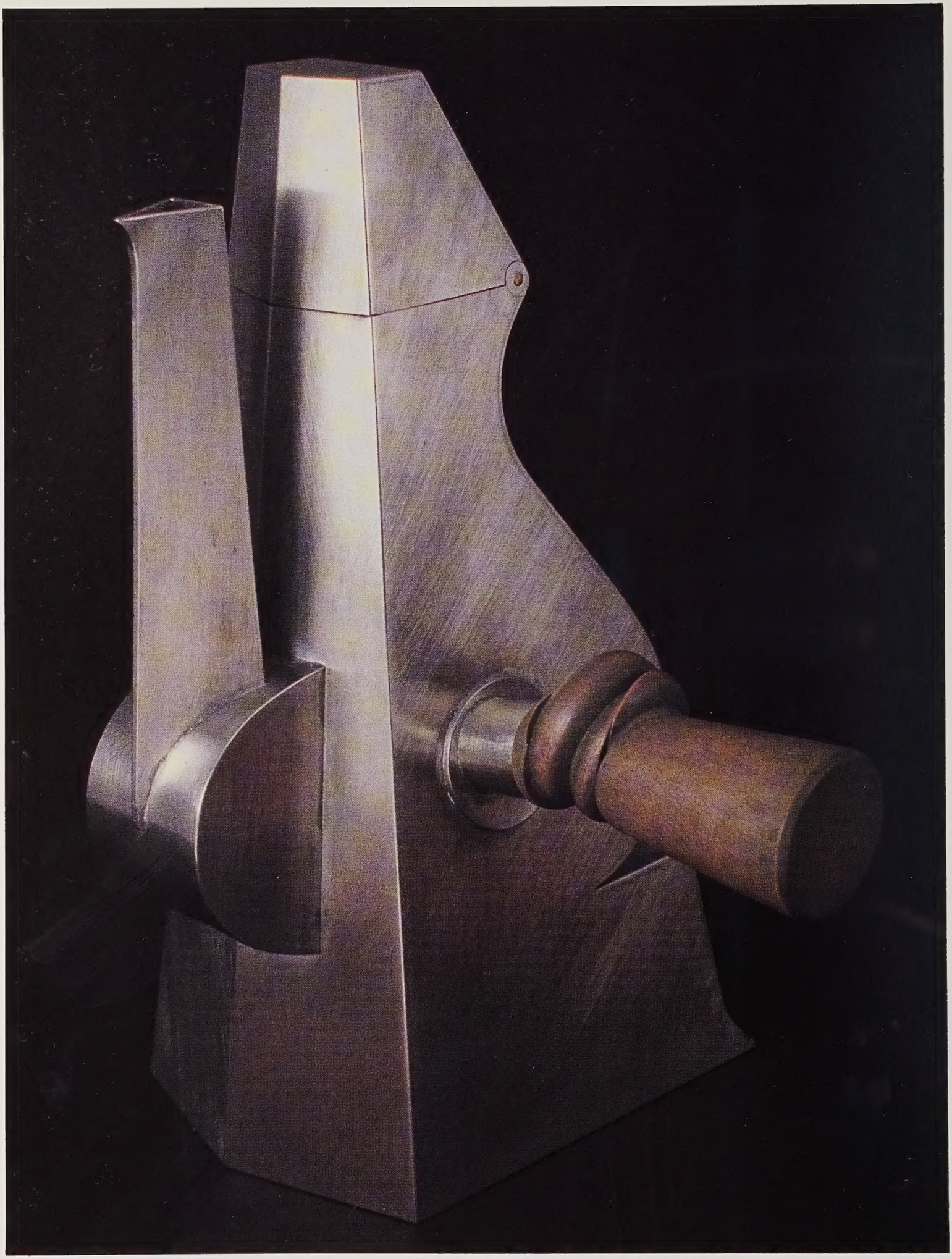

Michael Jerry, *Pewter coffee pot* with lathe-turned maple handle, 6 x 4 1/2 x 11", 1987. See page 24

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ART & TECHNICS

by Tim McCreight

We all have sounds that bother us. One of the sounds I most dislike is the faint click of mental doors shutting when certain topics are introduced. It seems that in some formative stage each of us has decided on topics that we can do without, and the mention of one of these triggers a shut-down reaction. What a pity. One that concerns me at the moment is the mention of history. Did anybody hear a click?

In a popular song the rock musician Sting says, "History teaches nothing." In anger and grief the song describes the bigotry, greed and violence of our species and points out our inability to reform. Unable to learn from the disasters of the past, we continue to live at the lowest level of our expectations. History, it seems, teaches nothing.

At the same time, though, we must acknowledge the sheer tenacity of the subject. From family trees to baseball statistics, our species seems to be fanatic about history. We can't cut ourselves off from it, even if we think we'd like to. And yet, for all its intensity, mention it in class and the circuits click shut. And I think that's a shame.

The common view paints history as a giant bulldozer. It has traveled a great distance and left in its wake a gouged but level swath. Understanding the lessons of history, so the thinking goes, would be like using the bulldozer to smooth out rough places ahead of us. The going would be so much easier if we could only understand the lessons of history.

But imagine a history that is not so simplistically linear. Picture instead a rich stew, all stirred round with vegetables, meats, spices and gravy. Similar chunks keep popping up with each ladleful. Sequence is nothing, the mix is everything. In the same way, similar themes keep reappearing throughout history. Try this: Choose an idea and try to give it a single place on the time line of history. The dignity of the individual, for example? You'll find it in Greece in 200 BC, in China around 900, in England in 1850 and Haight-Ashbury in 1968. Examples abound and are particularly familiar to the arts. How many times have you seen a remarkably modern piece in a museum or book, only to discover that it is centuries old? Like the stirred pot of stew, history keeps bringing familiar morsels to the surface. I find this in itself fascinating.

Axe, Egyptian, bronze, wood, leather, 2040-1786 B.C. Collection: Higgins Armory Museum, Worcester, MA; drawing by Tim McCreight

But back to the lessons. If this view is right and history is simply a one-course meal, made without a recipe and left at a perpetual simmer, what possible lessons can it teach us? As with any lesson worth learning, we must first ask the right questions.

Here's a suggestion, ask this one. *What do I like?* Yes, it's simple but there might be more there than is at first apparent. Note the object of the question: I. Not what pleases most people, not what the experts have determined, but, what has the vast feast of history got for me? Notice also that an erudite answer is not needed. The question is not what is "best" but simply what do I "like."

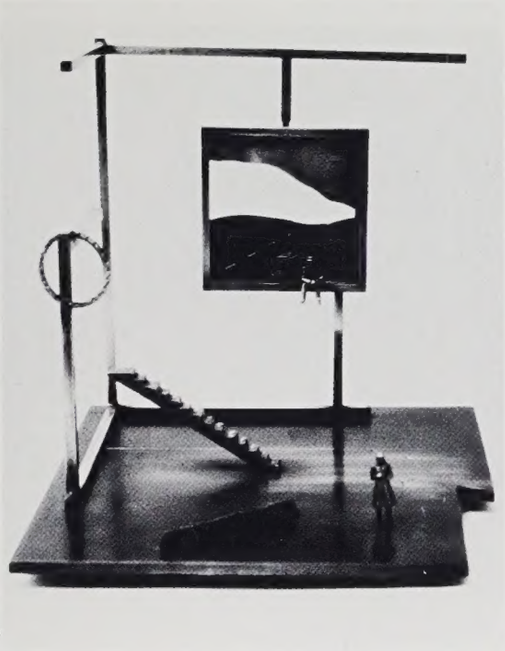
Another question, and again an easy one, is *Why do I like it?* There's that "I" again—any answer can be correct. The choices are subjective so no one can make you wrong. Too many people forget to ask this as they walk through a museum. You've seen the routine: glance at the canvas, bend over to read the label, move on along the wall and repeat. We're more critical about which toothpaste to buy than what art to like.

And one last question I'd like to suggest. *What am I going to do about it?* You don't have to do anything about it. But the coupling of action with judgment gives it more meaning. You don't go into the drugstore, select a toothpaste out of academic interest then leave without buying it. That's silly and you'd soon get tired of evaluating toothpastes. It shouldn't be surprising then that a review of history that fails to include a meaningful conclusion would also be boring. By asking this last question, by establishing an interaction with history, we make our lives more interesting. And this, it seems to me, is the destination we've been seeking. No, we can't expect specific answers from history, but we can enrich our lives. In this sense history takes its place alongside art as a pleasure whose existence requires no justification.

Elbert Hubbard said, "Art is not a Thing, it is a Way." Perhaps in this sense the song is accurate. History teaches no *thing*. But it can teach us a way, it can influence the attitude we bring to our lives and our art.

Tim McCreight is head of the Metals Department at the Portland School of Art, Portland, ME and a regular contributer to Metalsmith.

MARY ANN SPAVINS-OWEN



FRAMEWORK #3, **SCULPTURE WITH PIN, COPPER, SS, 18KT. GOLD, 6" x 6" x 6"**

REPRESENTED BY:

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Los Angeles, CA

Dexterity
Toronto, Canada

G/M Galleries
West Stockbridge, MA

Janice Rudy
Houston, TX

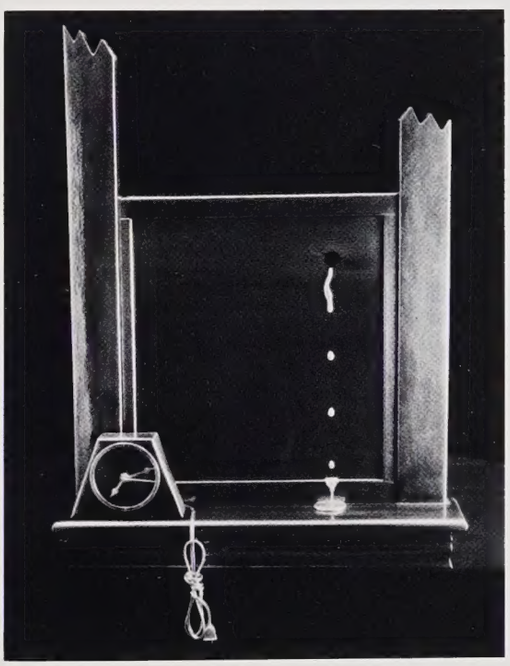
Nancy Margolis Gallery
Portland, ME

Neil Isman Gallery
New York, NY

Swan Gallery
Philadelphia, PA

Zenith Gallery
Washington, DC

MALCOLM OWEN



THE NORTH WINDOW, **WALL CLOCK, HAND HAMMERED COPPER, PEWTER, 38" x 25" x 6 1/2"**

APPALACHIAN CENTER FOR CRAFTS

The A.C.C. is pleased to have Patricia Woods as guest faculty in Metalsmithing. Patricia is currently Tutor in Charge of Metals at South Devon College of Art and Technology, Torquay United Kingdom. She will be coming to us as part of a Fulbright Exchange program for the academic year 1988-89.

For more information on working with Patricia Woods or information on our Degree and Non-Degree programs contact Alf Ward, Director, Appalachian Center for Crafts RT. 3 Box 430 Smithville, TN 37166

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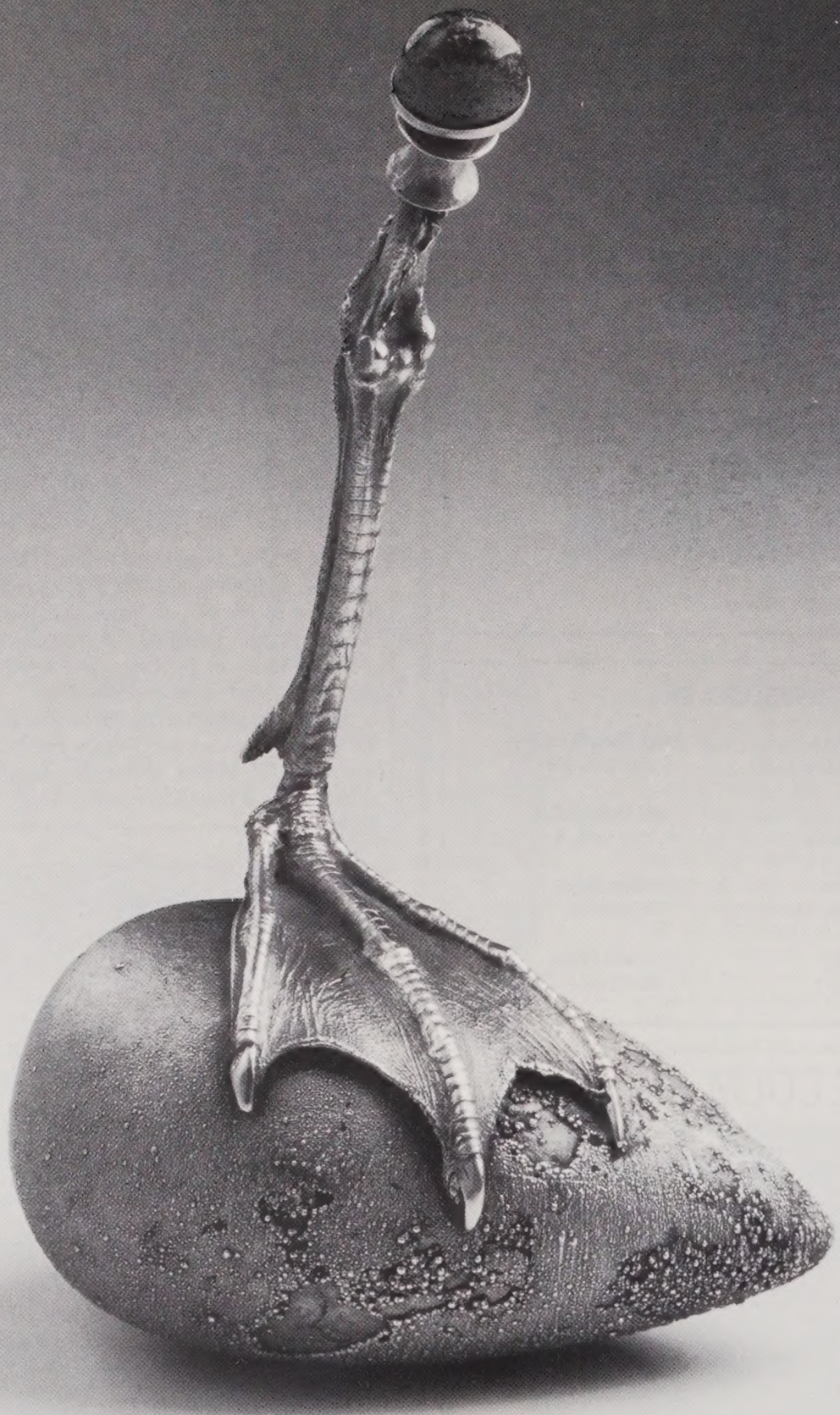
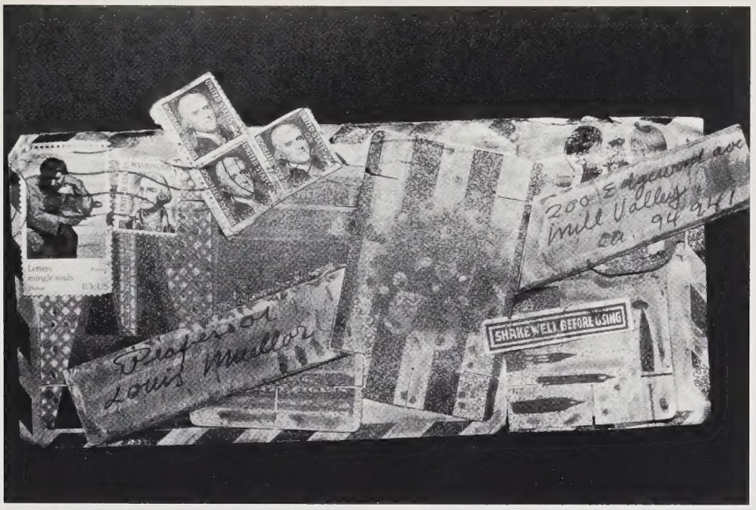
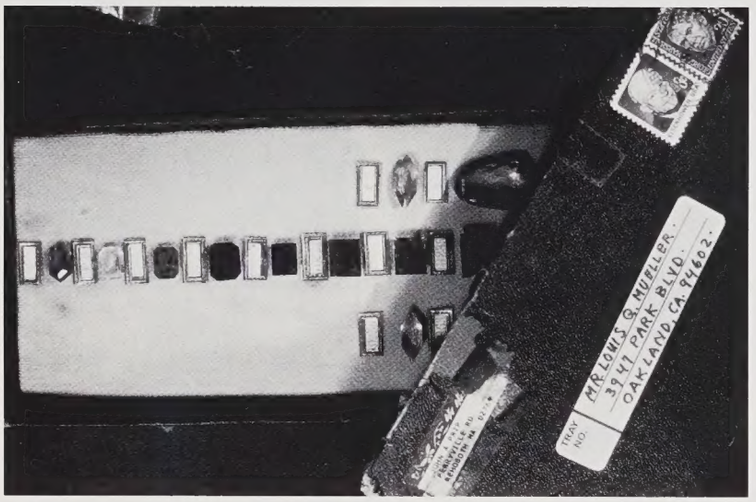
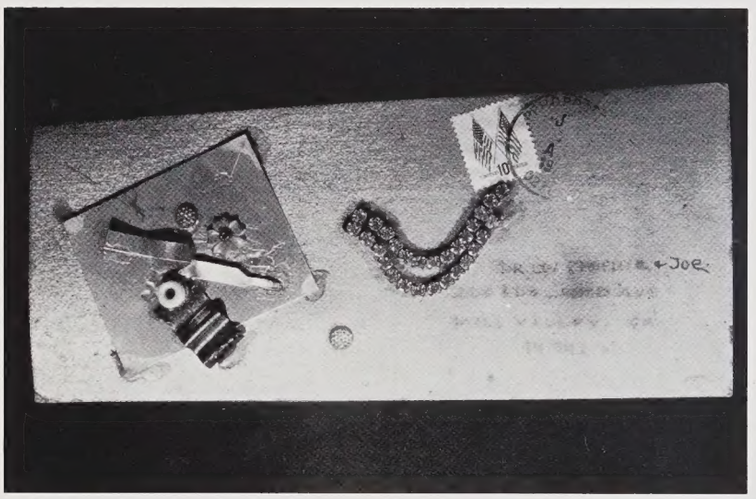


JOHN PRIP
ARRANGEMENTS OF CHANGEABLE FORM

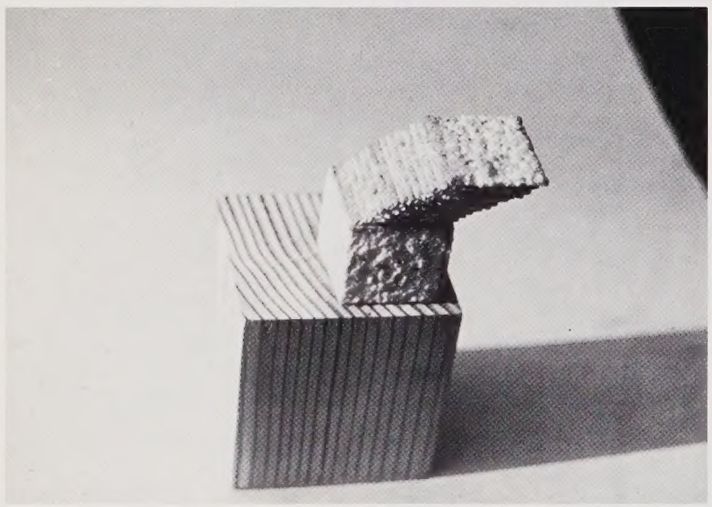






Opposite: *Gilley's Gull,* sterling silver, 5 x 2 x ⅞", 1971. Photo: Roger Birn; **above:** *Mail Art: Christmas Tray and Squeezably Soft,* which Jack Prip sent to Louis Mueller in the 1970s

This past year, we were treated to a major retrospective of the work of John Prip in an exhibition that originated at the Rhode Island School of Design Museum in Providence, RI and traveled to the American Craft Museum in New York. This exhibit provided a rare opportunity to almost tangibly participate in the whole career of a living artist—a pioneer in the field of metalsmithing, who helped spur on a whole new esthetic in American holloware—an influential, if eccentric, teacher and a lover of the serendipitous. The often inadequate confines of two-dimensionality are sorely felt in trying to recreate the overwhelming vivacity and inventiveness of Prip's work and the exhibit assembled by his own hand. So, here we offer as best as possible, a glimpse into that dynamic work, accompanied by comments of individuals who have known Prip well, many of whom have studied with him.



Top: *Saltines* stacked on sanded wood block; **above:** Shield with horn, late 1950s

PORTRAITS OF SUGGESTION

by Madeleine Vanderpoel

Box, silver with cast lid

How many times have we picked up a beach stone and marveled over its shape and texture? Feeling some mysterious energy, we carry it a while in the palm of our hand. Jack Prip goes to a special beach in Maine to collect these stones. Not only seeking their innate fascination, he desires them for their potential in creative transformation. With sandblasting, some stones become highly polished. Others, polished on the exterior, have unpolished, rough cavities covered with silver lids. The lids appear as hard, decorative skins that seem to need to be peeled off. Attracted by the color, shape and texture of these stones, Prip adds personality to what nature has already provided.

Jack's work focuses on the container, which he explains is "a term that didn't exist until recently, except to describe a shape for holding something specific like coffee or cigars. Now, anything that has a hole in it can be called a container. It has a freer association." As Jack talks about his work, he becomes animated and specific. Commenting on the inspiration for a certain teapot, he remembers having "a fondness for chubby forms. I wanted to draw the spout out of the piece." For another vessel, his intent was to make a smooth form. "I became interested in bald shapes that would sit and do nothing. I would drop the lid in and finish it off with the pot, making a seamless conformity of lid to vessel." With his own organic vocabulary, Jack invents ways into his materials and out again, never needing to sit at the drawing board and design around each piece.

Jack can take a geometric or organic shape and, with his understanding of form and careful handling of materials, give it information and purpose. There is something obdurate about his choice of materials; yet, he has the ability to soften the hard and warm the cold. A silver box with a crude, jagged texture, which Jack calls "exaggerated granulation" has two amethysts set into the lid, creating a visual relief on this rugged mesa of space. Reflective of material concepts, his containers and boxes are portraits of thought and suggestion. They sketch in the mind a certain eager possibility, while calmly harmonizing the dichotomies of shiny/dull, soft/hard and interior/exterior.

Jack's early influences, besides his rigorous training in Danish silversmithing, were also Scandinavian art nouveau and the work of Picasso, Brancusi, Klee and Miro. At age 26, when he was invited to teach at the School for American Craftsmen in Alfred, New York, he launched into the most intense, exciting time of his career. Unlike Copenhagen where silversmithing was a trade like that of a stonemason or plumber, the School for American Craftsmen offered silversmithing and metalsmithing as something with

Overlap Box, pewter, 1984. Photo: Roger Birn, courtesy American Craft Museum

Container, pewter

artistic potential. With only technical training, Jack responded quickly to the concepts of potter and fellow teacher Frans Wildenhain, who had studied at the Bauhaus. Suddenly, he was exposed to silversmithing as an artist and not as a tradesman. Some of his fondest memories are of this time in Rochester—where the School for American Craftsmen moved a few years after he was hired—where he spent 20 years working, struggling and forming close bonds with other craftsmen and students.

Later Jack would work at Reed and Barton. It was here that he discovered electroforming and how to use pewter as an alternative to sterling silver. Roger Hallwell of Reed and Barton describes Jack's position, as designer/craftsman in residence: "There were no restrictions or demands imposed on him. He was simply to create by hand whatever and whenever the spirit moved him." In this distinguished position, Jack created opportunities for other craftsmen to bring creativity and design into the world of mass production.

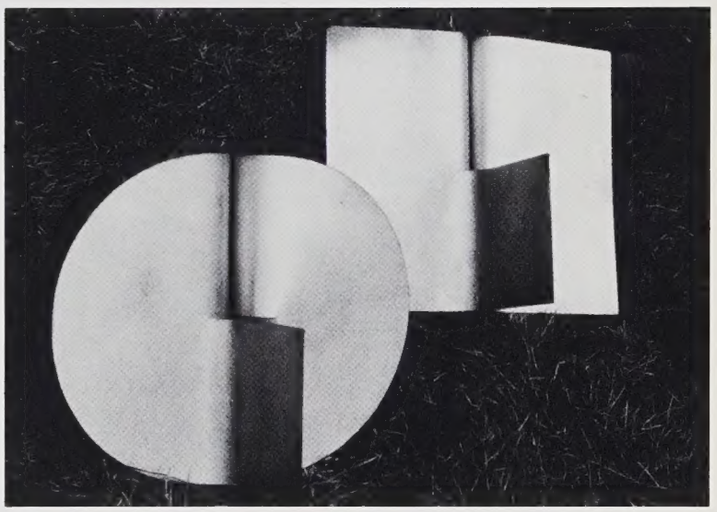
Suffering, at times, from the difficulties of working with metal, Jack explored lead, paper and styrofoam. "I'm attracted to these kinds of materials because much of what I do is dictated by the desire to free myself from the confines and restrictions that silversmithing imposes. It is a careful and exacting skill. Everything has to be planned out, considered. The process is very time-consuming." In the childhood memories of cutting out paper ornaments at Christmastime, Jack found he could use paper again as a way of sketching out three-dimensional forms. By folding, unfolding, making intricate cuts and popping out areas, he could improvise and invent quickly. Several maquettes for bracelets, metal sculptures and containers were made in paper. He also liked "the way light played on the whiteness of the paper, radiating a soft, subtle texture and glow." This process also led to seaming and interlocking of forms in metal characteristic of his work in the mid-1970s that employed layered, nautilus-shaped surfaces of a paperlike thinness.

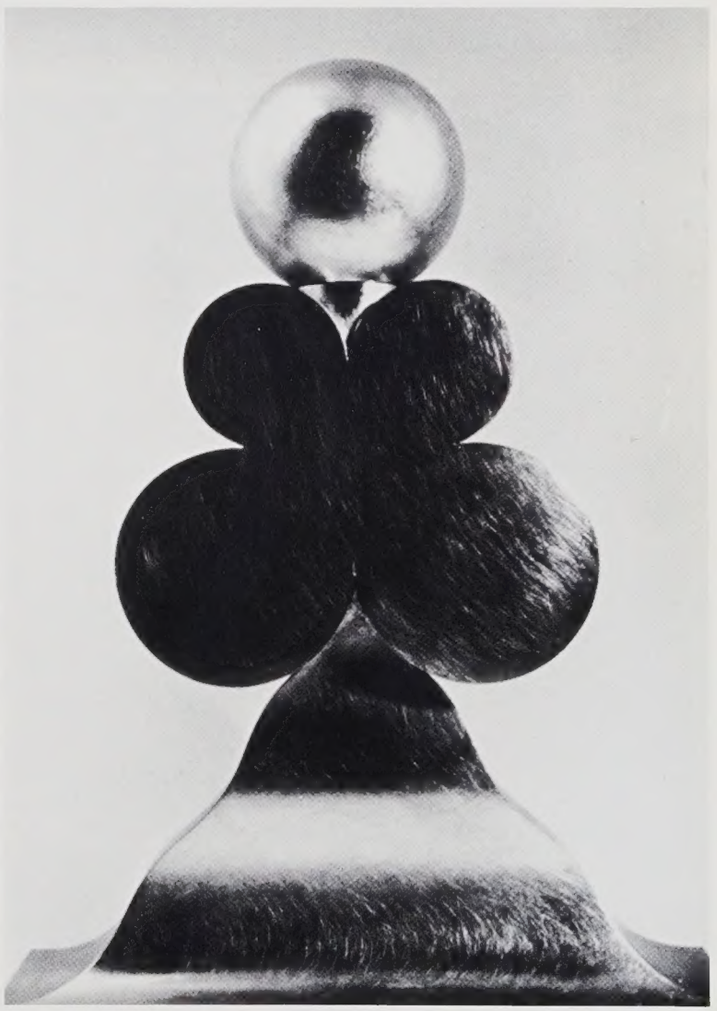
The saga of one such series of large cardboard units is related by Jack: "They were hard/soft, male/female units that I was very fond of. I never really felt I discovered how to use them properly. I made several large ones out of aluminum and just let them out by the pond and grass where they could roll around. The wind would pick them up sometimes. They looked like artifacts that should serve some purpose, but they didn't. Sometimes in the winter they would blow over on the pond, and in the spring, when the ice melted, they would sink slowly to the bottom."

Madeleine Vanderpoel is a writer living in Providence, RI.

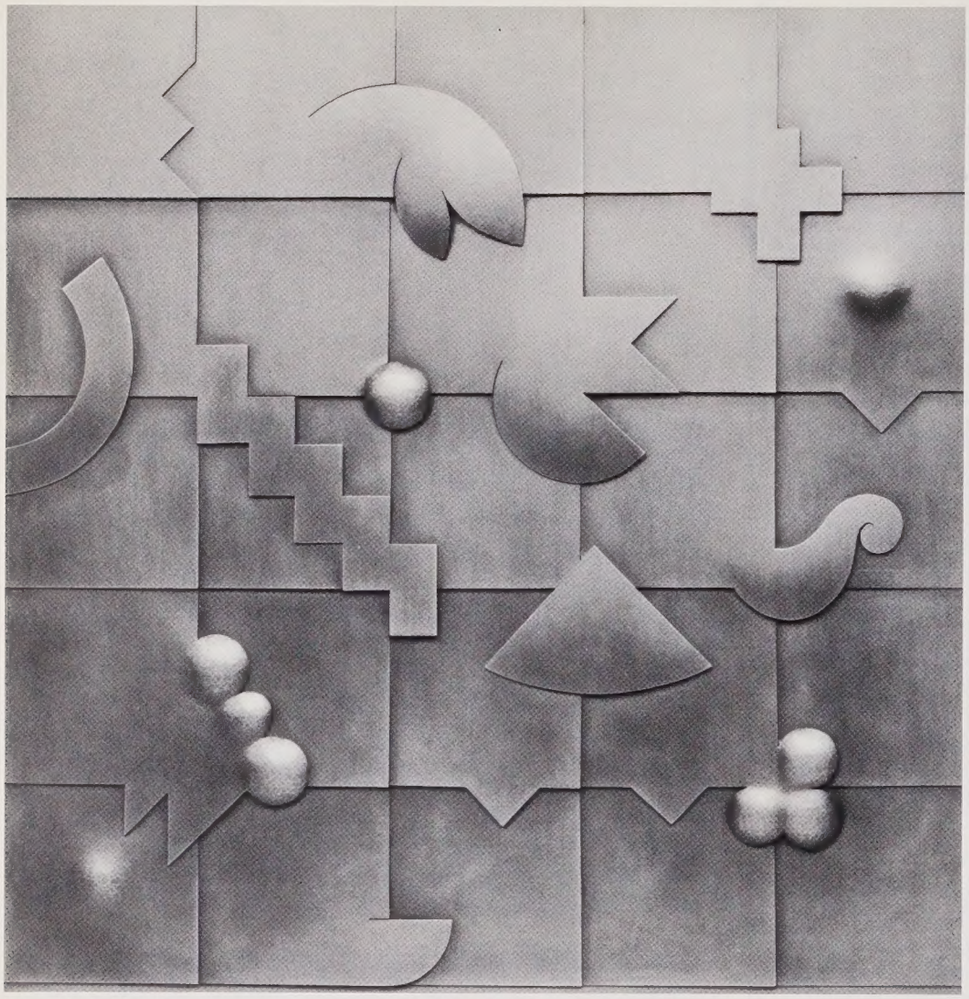
Jon Prip's work was most recently shown at the Gimpel & Weitzenhoffer Gallery in New York.

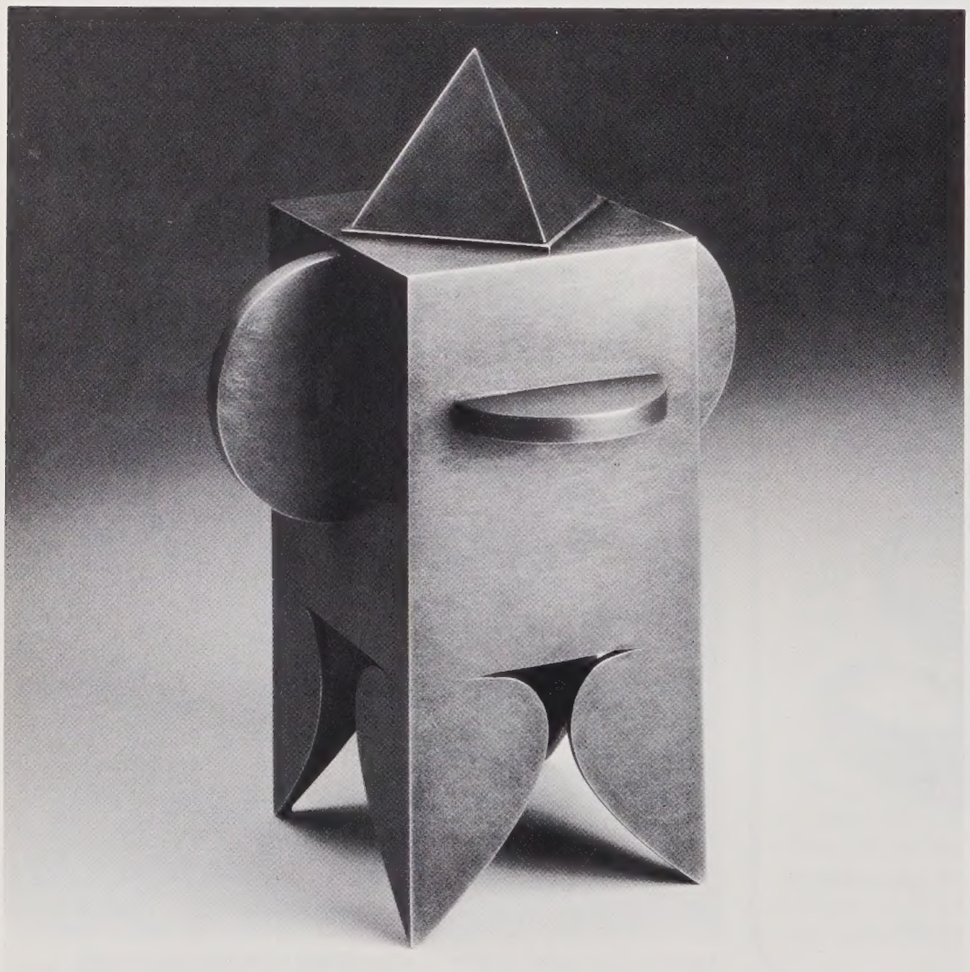
3 Containers, stone, pewter, nickel silver—largest 1 x 5 x 2".
Photo: George Erml, 1986





Top: Wind-propelled aluminum units; **above:** *Container*, pewter with nickel finish, 1970. Photos: Roger Birn, courtesy American Craft Museum





I arrived at RISD from SAC with a big head, and what I liked about Jack was that he recognized this and he said, "If you're confident, you don't have to wear it on your collar." Jack helped me learn about humility and what confidence really is. He introduced me to the idea of being playful with what you do, much the opposite of the way I had interacted with Hans Christensen at SAC. Jack was not as interested in the teacher-student relationship as he was about my life.

One of the most important things I learned from Jack had to do with concept and final execution. He made me see that you didn't have to consider the drawing you made to be the final idea about an object. You could change the verticals and horizontals and the object would come out much different than the original drawing, and that was good.

Oddly, Jack's recent retrospective gave me a chance to view him anew. I saw his strong will more openly. His air of confidence was only tinged with a laid-back attitude. I was most drawn to his work of the 1960s. These are the epitome of what craft should be. Later, as they became more whimsical, they moved away from craft for me. Since I never could compete with Jack's skill at execution, he could continue to be my role model. With Hans, everything was in the execution—the more perfect, the more complex, the better. Jack's work had a high quality of execution but with thought behind it and a sense of design that he adopted outside of his training in Denmark. I saw him for that reason as being human.

Jack had a habit of coming into school with apples. When I left RISD for California, I began to send cards to him along the theme of apples. Soon my whole class was sending him apple-related cards. In the early 70s, someone once sent a 36 pound squash with the address written directly on it. I must have a box full of cards that I received back from Jack.

—Louis Mueller
Head, Light Metals, RISD

My overall impression of being a student of Jack Prip was that it was an ongoing mental process. This came both from Jack's indirect way of interacting with his students and also from his own propensity to play visual games. Jack had a knack for taking things that serrendipitously came to him at the studio or in his office and arranging them in new and unexpected configurations. For example, one time an orange sat on his shelf for a long time and became dried and shriveled. Totally unrelated, I brought in a box of gold dot stickums. The next thing I knew there was a dotted line leading into his office up to the orange on the shelf and the orange itself was respotted gold, an action that totally changed and enhanced its appearance. Jack had this ability to seize the moment, to improvise

on his surroundings to the delight of everyone in the studio.

What was difficult for me, when I was a student at RISD from 1974-76, was that the learning environment was entirely unstructured. This was a sign of the times, and yet also was a product of Jack fighting his own traditional silversmithing training, which had been extremely rigid and controlled. But Jack insured that you would be self-motivated not through the articulation of some principles or teaching methods but through other, more subtle ways. We were not made to work; we were made to want to work. He was in the habit of visiting students' benches after hours and tinkering with pieces or rearranging things for emphasis. I know he was greatly involved in the students' work, because I would catch him coming by and pondering, not speaking but showing approval or disapproval through mannerisms, a sigh, a nod, even a snub, on occasion, would clearly show that he was disappointed.

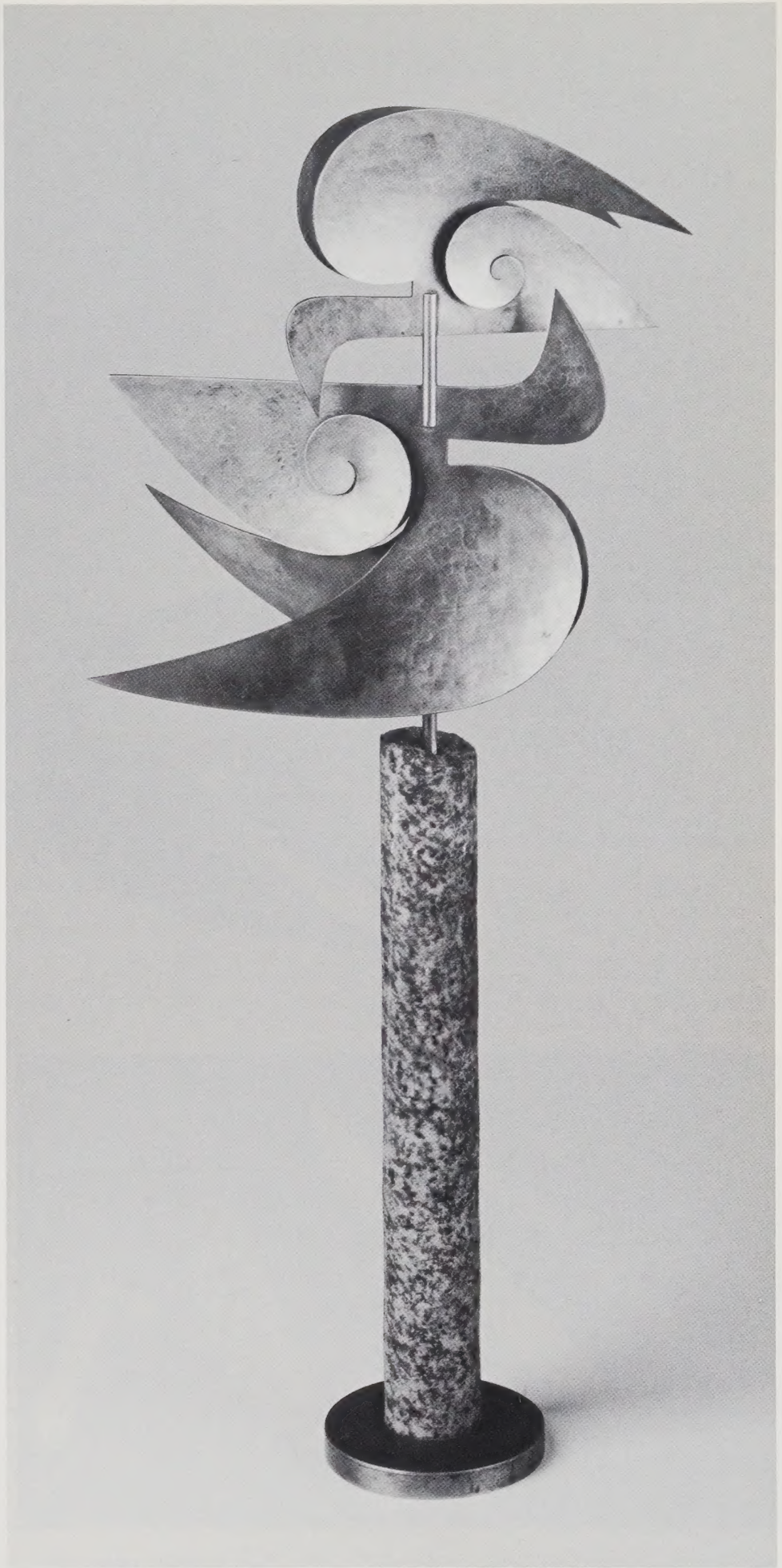
A second major impact of Jack's teaching was his willingness to share his studio at home with his students. Again, this was done in a seemingly offhand manner, by, for example, the annual ritual of the Fall Walk, when we all would be invited out to the house to walk in the woods. Karen, Jack's wife, would make a wonderful meal and then there would be dancing. But the studio was always a draw and the arrangements of his own work, his tools and his collections of paraphernalia always had some meaning for me. And I learned that no matter how casual-looking a detail of any piece that he had worked it over very carefully and intentionally.

Another important influence that Jack had on me was his urging me forward to do smithing, even though I was reluctant to begin on something unknown. I was most interested in jewelry, which he felt he didn't have a touch for, even though he has made some that I very much admire. He did feel that a jeweler had a different sensibility from a smith. Nevertheless, raising taught us how to achieve form in metal that was important for a jeweler. It takes jewelry away from a constructed attitude and gives it volume and form. And Jack was concerned that jewelers not just make things out of sheet metal and wire. The application of silversmithing techniques to jewelry also allowed people to get involved in small projects that were not as daunting or time consuming as a teapot or other traditional smithing projects.

—Robin Quigley
Assistant Professor, Light Metals, RISD

There are only a handful of true artists in the metals field, and even fewer who teach. Those that can spark a student's unique individuality and creativity without imposing too much of themselves are even rarer. Jack Prip leads the pack.

Jack taught through broad concepts and



Opposite, above: *Wall Relief*, copper, 1980-87; **below:** *Box with Handles*, pewter, 1985; **above:** *Dead Bird*, nickel silver, granite base, 1964. Photos: Roger Birn, courtesy American Craft Museum

Top: *Container*, stone, onyx, glass inlay, 1 1/4 x 4 1/4 x 3 1/2", 1985. Photo: Roger Birn; **center:** *Hammered Forms*, copper—larger 6 1/4 x 17 1/2 x 10", late 1950s-1967; **above:** *Flatware sketches*, paper, up to 10 1/2"1., 1986. Photo: George Erml, courtesy American Craft Museum, **opposite:** *Arrangement*, Prip's workbench taken by student Walter White, mid 1970s

ideas; his assignments asked you to ask youself questions, led you futher along your own path and were always without preconceived expectations. Each student arrived at a totally different result based on his or her own interests.

Our first assignment in graduate school was to consider how nonmetal things looked and were put together and to make something in metal inspired from this consideration. This way of looking at things has never left me, in fact, I'm still making "pillows."

Jack couldn't seem to resist rearranging things on our benches; we'd arrive to see our latest work in progress upside down, juxtaposed to what, at first glance, appeared to be the most unlikely thing. But it never failed to jog our minds and open up yet another door.

The assignment to work with a company in Providence and include an industrial process in our work seemed like an insurmountable task at the time. First, we had to scour the phone book for companies (a revelation), learn how to appear convincing on the telephone—enough to get through to someone in the actual plant—to even find out what they actually did (tough but got easier). Then we had to get there, tailor the assignment to the process and still come up with our original idea. Well, we really grumbled about that one, but had we not done all that we would never have begun preparing for all the opportunities it began to unfold, thanks to Jack!

His approach was always: don't analyze it, just do it, and if there's someone out there who can do it better, have them do it for you. We came to refer to it as the "no-hassle, heat & beat" approach, attempting to concern yourself with where you are going more than how you get there.

I'm glad I had an opportunity to work with Jack and to be part of the metalsmiths he influenced in his reassuring way.

—Jan Yager
Independent Jeweler, Philadelphia, PA

When I was an undergraduate at Philadelphia College of Art in the late 60s, Olaf Skoogfors regularly showed slides of his friend Jack Prip's work. Right from the first, I was entranced. I came to RISD graduate school in woodworking in 1971. At the end of the first semester, I transferred to metals to study with Jack. His teaching method was to throw me off balance as frequently as possible. I'd show him a piece, feeling pleased with myself. He'd pop that balloon in a hurry with a calculated remark. I would have no choice but to think about the piece in a much more meticulous way. This unsettling method prevented me from falling into a complacent groove with the work, but rather made me go forward. You can't ask for much more than that.

—Jonathan Bonner
Independent metalsmith/sculptor, Providence, RI

The following are excerpts from comments made by current RISD students after visiting Jack Prip's show at the RISD Museum.

Prip's vessels represent to me his unearthly ability to manipulate materials; rigidity does not hinder Prip, rather it inspires him. However, it is Prip's "art objects" that I enjoy the most. They combine his mastery of material with whimsical experimentation. In a way, John Prip is a Surrealist in that he does not readily know the intent of his pieces, neither does he expect the viewer to be infused with meanings. Prip's pieces are born from his wandering imagination and demand imaginative, emotional response from the viewer. To be shocked by the mystery of his "objets d'art" is a worthy reaction that need go no further. A dead fish cast in pewter, bisected by a cube that has on its face a half-sphere and a little squiggly mark is bizarre, perhaps arbitrary; yet, the mystery it evokes is wonderful.
—Alessandro Zezza

One of the remarkable things about Prip's work is that although it is essentially serious, it also has wit. There is a lightness to it, and the viewer finds pleasure in seeing Prip rise to each new challenge and master it. The stones I liked because of their simplicity of shape. Prip took nature and worked on it, almost the way nature would—by preserving the shapes of the stones, and at the same time enhancing these shapes. In some stones he hollowed out a space and filled it with beach pebbles. In others he worked on the surface in such a subtle way that his surface seemed to belong to the surface of the stone. He also hollowed out the stones and then closed them again with silver lids. The stones never ceased to be stones, but Prip increased their beauty by giving them a unique energy. It is this energy that lives in my mind after the show.
—Marissa Brown

I was impressed by Prip's ability to include the structures of other materials in his work. Bending sheet metal to mimic the natural rend of paper creates the impression that, like paper, the metal is resilient and fragile; like it would snap back if released, and to push it any further would destroy its form. Metal stretched into long shell-like stalks has a natural weightless quality. A bone's curve is added to a flatware design. Drips of water fall out into space. We know that it is metal, the color is left exposed, yet it takes on an additional structure and reveals ability....

Retrospectives are good in that they reveal a progression of work—improvement, exploration, learning. Prip's work shows all of these, along with an element of playfulness, reminding me that the work must be valuable to the artist to have any meaning at all. That Prip cares about his work is evident, and that makes it valuable for us all.
—Michael Zimmermann

The most fasincating aspect of Prip's masterpieces is the use of various techniques, such as twisting, bending and overlapping to establish a certain dignity. My favorites are the simplest in form but contain the most of Prip's effort in the attempt to achieve a solid identity, and he obviously succeeds. In analyzing one of the *Overlap Boxes*, the object's seams are joined one over another to incorporate themselves with the lid. The result is the development of a harmonious design that never seems to allow the viewer's eye to escape. The integration of the top and the bottom pieces and the slight rise of the circular line, which begins from the lid's edge and tapers off into the shiny surface, lead an observer's view to relentlessly flow along the infinite and successive mode of attention. The circular line may physically cease by disappearing into the lid; however, from that point, the focus is immediately shifted toward another element. So, the process never ends.
—Wonduk Han

•THE•

FOUNDING MASTERS

The following is an excerpt from the text of the catalog of "The Founding Masters" exhibit, held at the Schick Art Gallery of Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, NY, guest curated by Kurt Matzdorf under the directorship of Professor David Miller. The exhibit opened during the Society of North American Goldsmiths conference in June and remained at Skidmore during July. Since an illustrated catalog was produced to accompany the exhibition, we present here only a few of the newer pieces submitted to the show.

In November 1968, at the urging of Philip Morton, nine master gold-and silversmiths met in Chicago to plan a national conference and metals exhibition. After about one-half hour most of us agreed that creative gold-and silversmithing in North America had reached a point where more was needed than a big national exhibition. We envisioned a permanent organization that would let us share information, ideas and problems that we were encountering as artists, craftsmen and educators. Additional names of colleagues sharing our concerns were mentioned, and nine of those invited were able to join the "steering committee" in Boston in January and in Washington, D.C. in October, 1969.

We all felt that it was our task to raise substantially standards in both design and craftsmanship over those then prevailing in the field. Many of us were members of university art departments and accustomed to providing artistic and educational leadership. However, being fully aware of the dangers of the academic "ivory tower," we felt we needed the participation and expertise of those creative masters in our field who made their living exclusively from their own businesses.

Above: Ronald McNeish, *Forged Bracelet*, 14k yellow gold, 3 1/4"d; **below:** Brent Kington, *Weathervane*, forged bronze, 21 x 55 1/2 x 11", 1987; **opposite:** Phillip Fike, *"Gaudeamus igitur" Bowl*, pewter, gold, bronze, silver, copper, 10"d., 8"h. Collection: Sarah Cinelli

Many hours of discussion, heated at times, produced the constitution, bylaws, membership criteria, exhibition programs, etc. that resulted in the launching of the Society of North American Goldsmiths at the Minnesota Museum of Arts in St. Paul in March,1970 with the "Goldsmith '70" exhibition. The level of idea generation and the vitality displayed in the work shown was exhilarating and augured well for the future of the organization.

Since then, we have had conferences all over North America, exhibitions throughout the United States,Canada and Mexico, and a traveling exhibition through Europe. Members have researched, read and demonstrated innumerable technical papers. Our information service began with *Golddust*, which became *Goldsmith's Journal* and has now become *Metalsmith* magazine, supplemented by the *SNAG Newsletter.* The flourishing of the organization is largely due to a succession of enthusiastic and devoted presidents and board members who have given generously of their time.

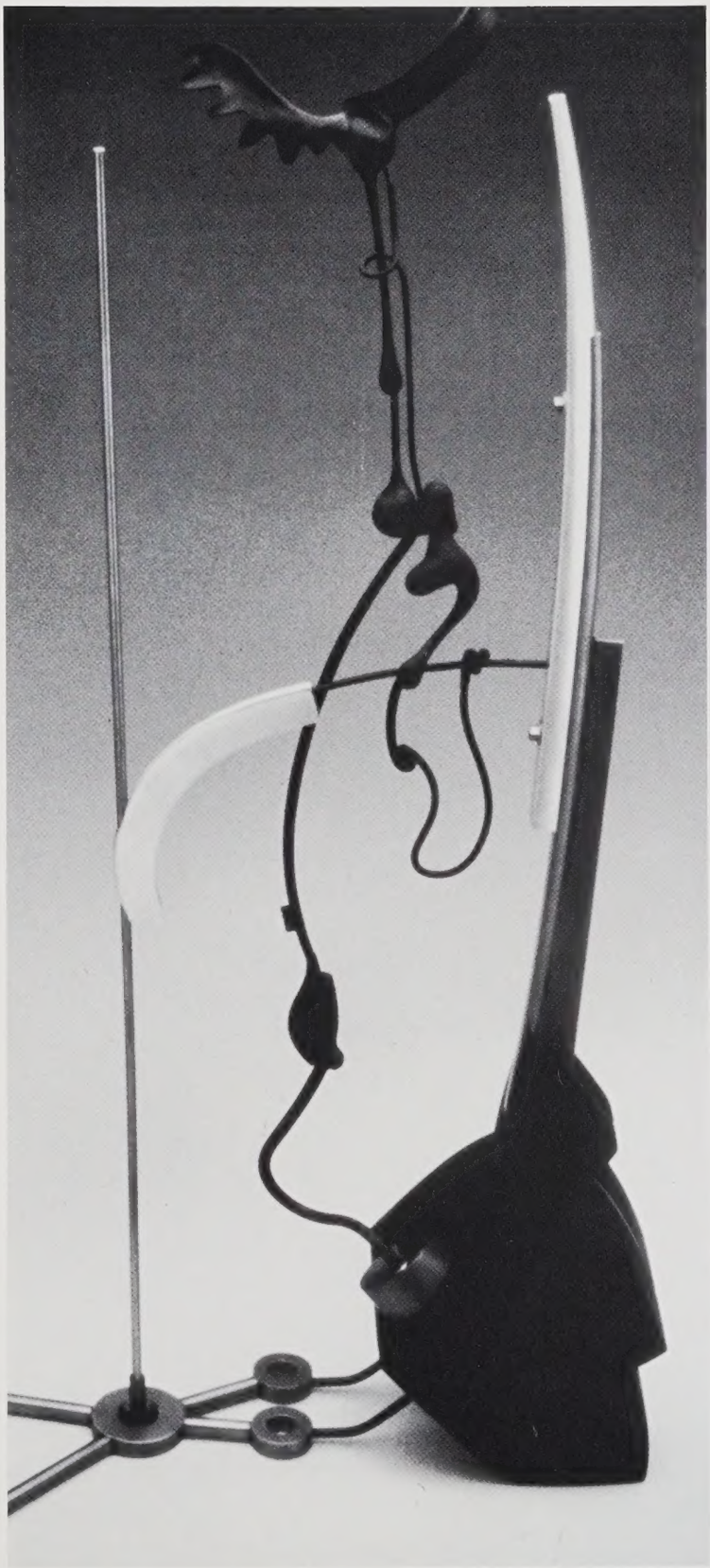
Most of the running of the organizaiton has now passed from the founding masters to the next generation of master goldsmiths. The founding masters have continued their quest for perfection in their workshops, constantly trying out new ideas, perhaps driven by the famous dictum of that greatest innovator of modern times, Thomas Edison: "There must be a better way—go find it!"

—Kurt Matzdorf, *Professor Emeritus of Gold and Silversmithing, State University of New York, College at New Paltz Guest Curator*

Robert W. Ebendorf • Fred Fenster • Phillip Fike • Arline Fisch • Michael Jerry
Hero W. Kielman • Brent Kington • Orland Larson • Stanley Lechtzin • Miye Matsukata
Kurt Matzdorf • Ronald F. McNeish • Philip Morton • Ronald Hayes Pearson
John Prip • Heikki Seppä • Olaf Skoogfors • Harold Gordon Stacey

TOM MUIR

Opposite page:
Cycladic Figure Impregnated with 20,
sterling silver, anodized aluminum, 18k gold, copper,
10 1/2 x 3 x 4", 1987;
below:
Wired Rock Star,
brass, aluminum, steel, copper, bronze, wood, paint,
13 x 7 x 2"



Holloware is not dead; it's just reawakening. With the recent shows—"Holloware '87" at the Tower Fine Art Gallery, SUNY at Brockport and "Silver in Service" at the Castle Gallery, College of New Rochelle, there is evidence that the intellectual vigor of silversmithing has not abated. Notable works are being produced by young and old alike, some rediscovering the process, function and concepts of holloware's tradition; some coming to them with a fresh eye.

Tom Muir is one such member of the younger generation of silversmiths who is taking provocative chances with holloware's esthetic. Muir's influence can be traced back to Alma Eikerman and the "Indiana School," as he was introduced to the genre by Richard Mafong (an Indiana graduate) at Georgia State and then took graduate studies with Leslie Leupp and Randy Long at Bloomington. Eikerman's approach, as evidenced in Muir's work, is based on the concept of 'vitalism," first applied to the sculpture of Henry Moore. The expression of holloware for Eikerman is abstracted from nature by infusing the work with pentup energy, independent of the subject. The vitalism, or life force, resides in the volume of creation; the form contains the energy.

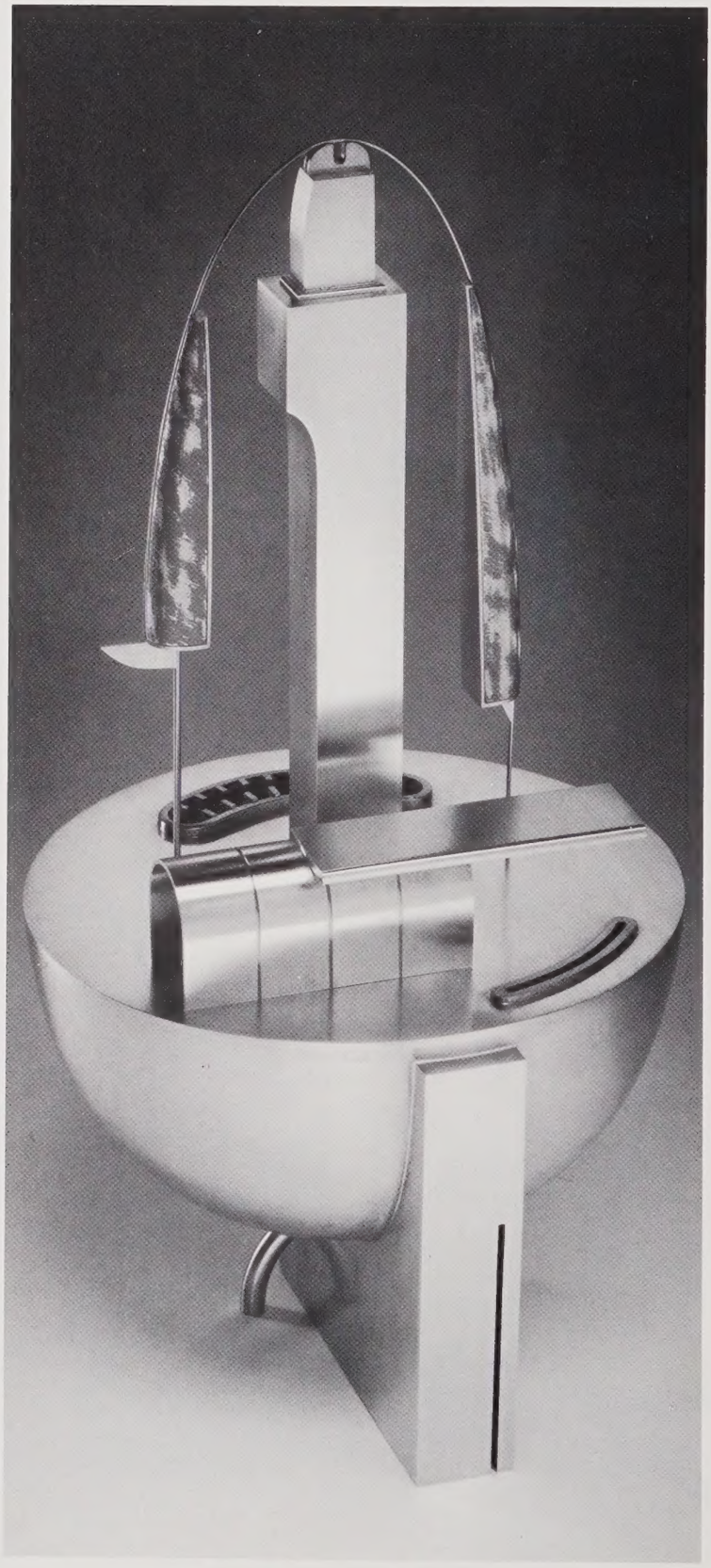
Following Eikerman's lead, Muir explores the inherent conflict between the mysterious energy trapped within the vessel and the manipulation of the skin that takes a recognizable shape conditioned by the functional requirements of the piece. In *Cycladic Figure Impregnated with 20,* the customary elements of handle, lid, foot, etc. articulate the object's desire to be a pitcher, while the bulging belly that contorts the overall shape suggests that there is something inside of equal importance. The vessel's force is being determined by the vitality of what is contained: literally, it is the liquid, and, metaphorically, it is the artist's energy.

In *Figure Vessel,* the life force is associated with nature's rhythms. The sluglike form is animated, conveying its potential to lie down and slither about under its own volition. The question raised by Muir's work is whether holloware's sculptural possibilities derive from the inside or the outside of the piece, whether the creative process pushes the skin outwards or whether the skin is raised to envelop and calm the turbulent atmosphere of its interior space. Where does the true character of holloware lie?

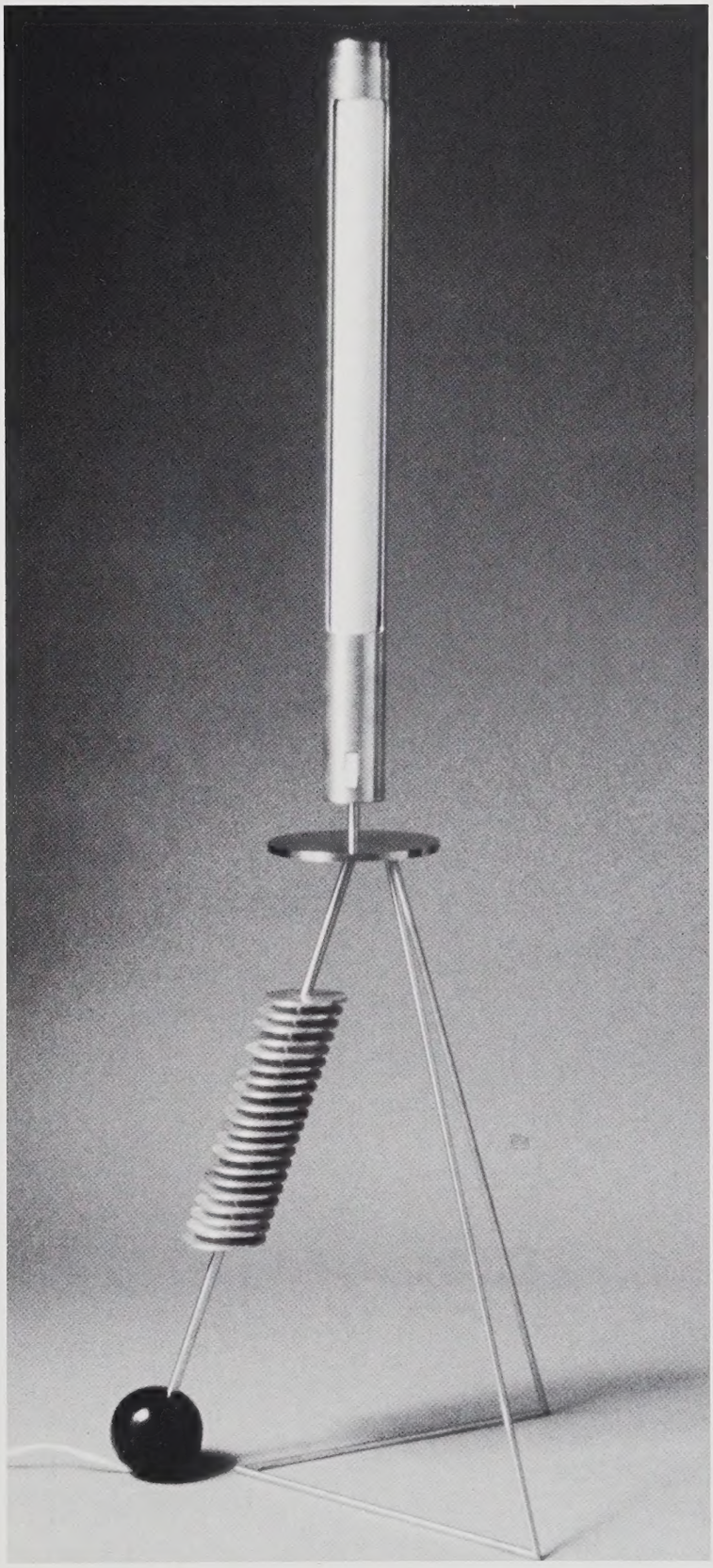
Muir has furthered his investigation of contained energy in his use of mechanistic contrivances coupled with holloware's traditional organicism. A naturalist by disposition, he understands and appreciates nature's logic. However, the manmade environment is of comparable interest to him by virtue of its own unique manifestation of vitality. In their unpredictability, mechanical constructions appear threatening, dangerous and mysterious. Nevertheless, they are normal components of traditional holloware, since, functionally, hinges and handles must be reconciled with the fluidity of raised forms. But for Muir, they also offer scuptural analogies, as they derive from the energy in both their imagery and function. Muir's lamps and constructions—*Wired Rock Star*—offer the essence of holloware as energized space. While his compositions become more abstract, merely drawn by linear elements, Muir is still confronting holloware's mysterious attraction of containment. —SB

Tom Muir's work has recently been show in "Holloware '87", "Silver in Service", "Contemporary Metals U.S.A. III" at the Downey Museum of Art and "Illustrous Luminaries: Light Art," Hoffman Gallery, Oregon School of Art and Crafts.

Untitled
brass, copper, nickel, stainless steel, wood, paint,
12 x 6 1/2 x 6 1/4", 1988. Photo: Tim Thayer



Mr. Lamp,
stainless steel, aluminum, nickel, wood,
fluorescent bulb, 46 1/2 x 16 1/2 x 14", 1983



JANET PRIP

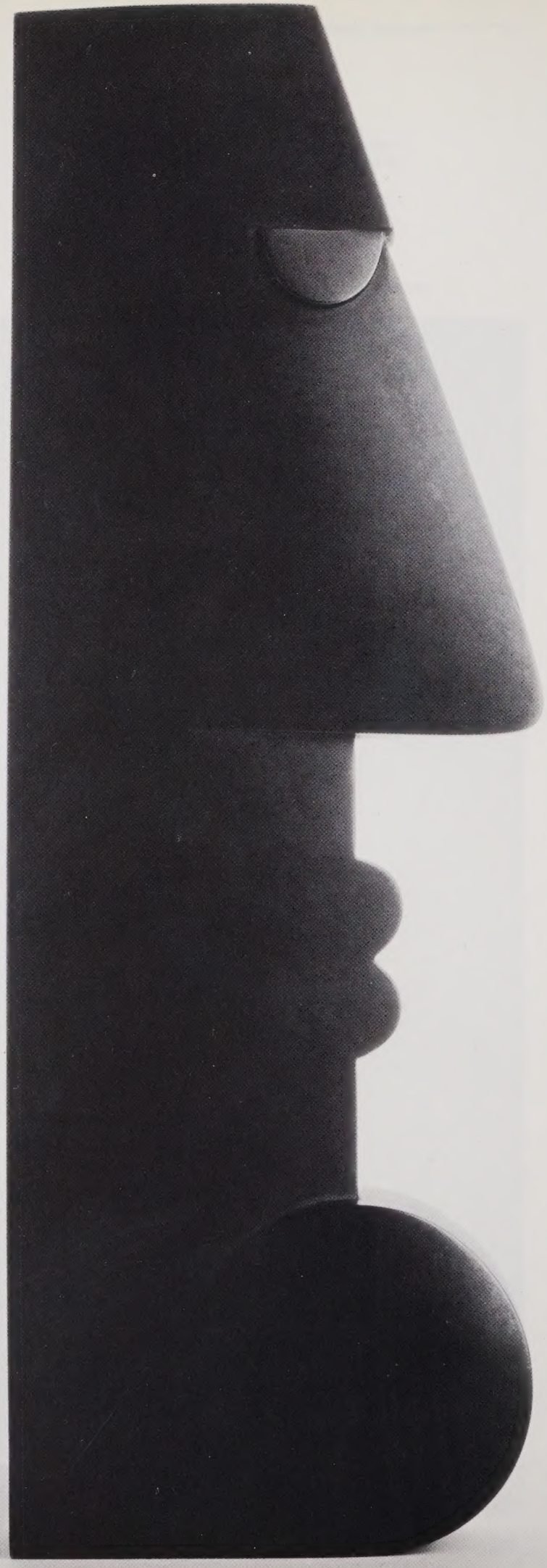
Janet Prip makes graphic holloware. Her striking vessels are rendered with bold profiles and darkened silhouettes suggestive of "hollow" men and women with one-dimensional personalities.

The expressive line that controls the features of her vessels derives from the cut-and-lift process in fabrication. Her father, Jack Prip, had discovered this linear element in Shaker boxes. He looked to these models not for the austerity of form but for the one decorative element that commanded their presence, the seam. Although a necessity of construction, for Jack, and also for Robin Quigley,the seam became the focus of their boxes, the line meandering about the lid, provocative in the manner of its visual and tactile relief.

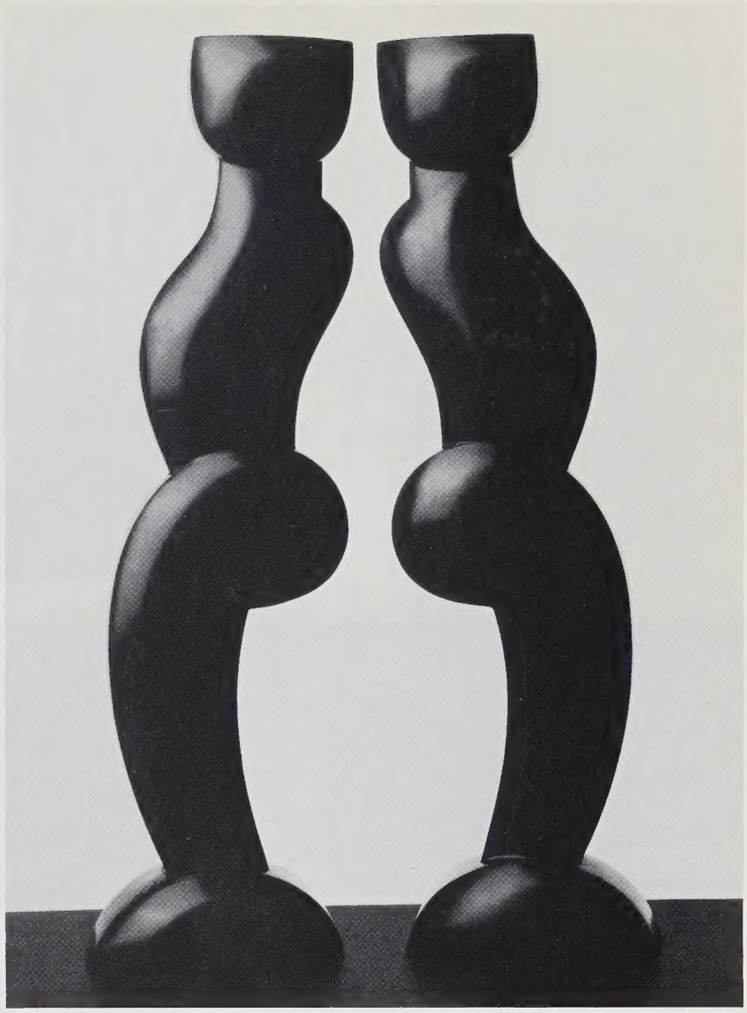
Janet Prip has further isolated the interpretive possibilities of fabrication, incurred by the sharp focus of edges. Her vessels deviate from the sculpture-in-the-round of traditional holloware or container forms, as their orientation is clearly two-dimensional, front and back. The contours that mark her planes serve not only to frame her vessels but also to draw the outline of her portraits.

Janet Prip's anthropomorphic vases stand independent of the logic in raising techniques. Made from bronze and pewter, they appear chiseled rather than modeled, cutouts employing negative space and truncated volumes. These desultory figures in holloware are shadowy images of human nature, hinting at an apparent emptiness within.—SB

Janet Prip's work has most recently been shown at The Hand & Spirit Gallery, Scottsdale, AZ and at the Gimpel & Weitzenhoffer Gallery in New York.



Bronze vase, red/brown stipple patina, 13 x 4 1/2", 1987; **opposite, clockwise from top left:** *Pewter vase with gold-leaf lips*, 14 x 6", 1986; *Pair of bronze candlesticks*, black patina, each 12 x 3 1/2"1988; *Pewter vase with granite base*, 14 x 6 1/2", 1986; *Pewter vase*, 13 x 7", 1986. Photos: Roger Birn

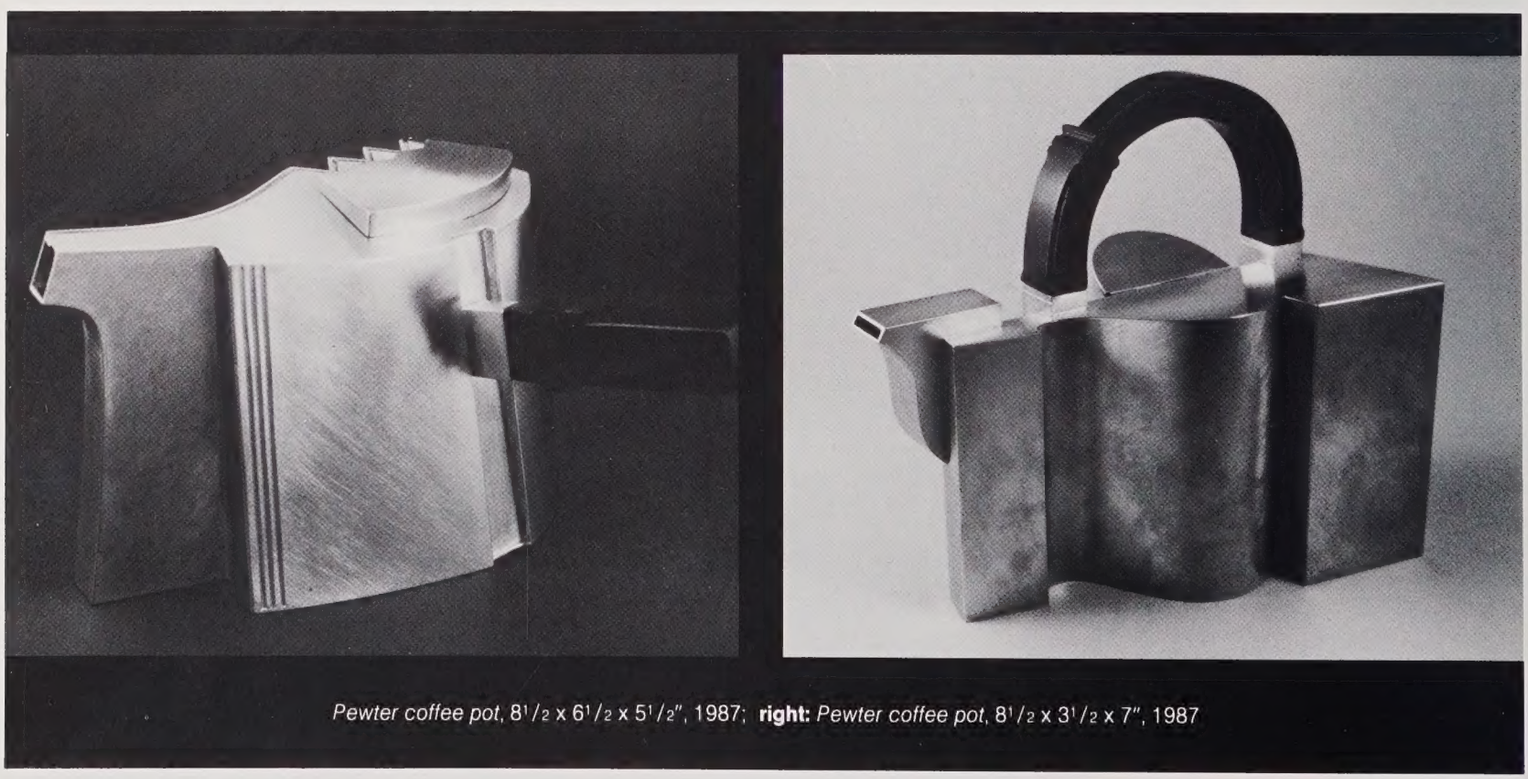


MICHAEL JERRY

Never considered a material worthy of virtuous technique, pewter continues to have a special value for metalsmiths. Ideas, for the plastic artist, are only made real in production. Working in precious metals that risk time and expense demands austere forms to free the maker to concentrate on execution. The pressure put on the object is one of distillation rather than extrapolation. The long process of personal experimentation must yield to the singular object whose elapsed time of production transverses the changes in the artist's personality and intuition...not so with pewter.

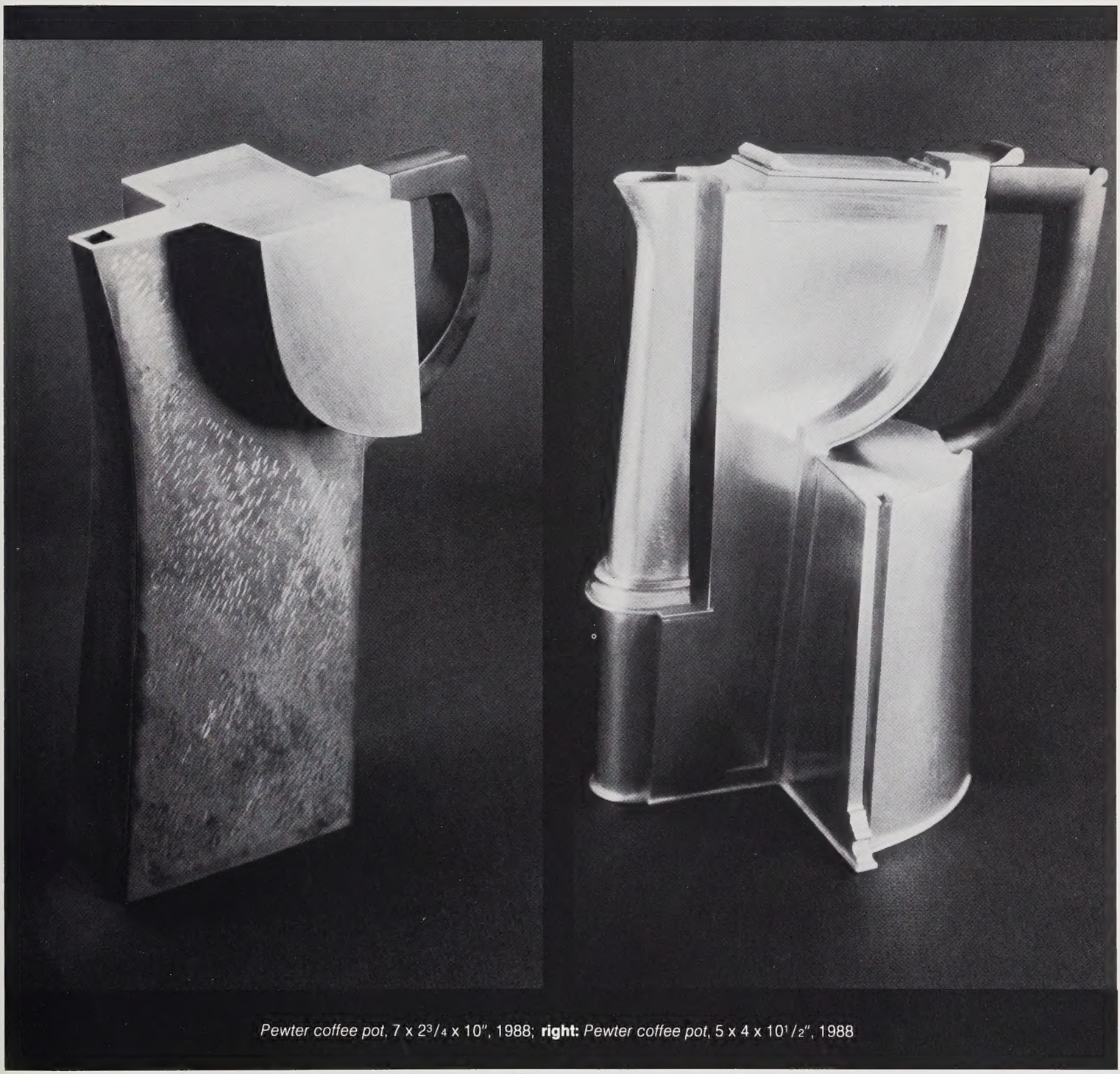
Over the last few years, Michael Jerry has been immersed in architectural analogies for holloware, using pewter to execute a series of forms that build upon common themes. The cubist distortion of planes, facilitated by the properties of pewter, characterizes discrete volumes, individual parts that are engineered in a variety of configurations. The individual segments are joined (welded, soldered) in an articulated fashion, where parts relate independently of one another, i.e., spout to handle to lid. On one coffee pot the spout appears freestanding, like a chimney; on another it appears as a decorative element of the facade. The surface of pewter complements the feeling of mass rather than volume, of structure and elevation that responds differently to the contingencies of light.

The diversity of forms occasioned by working in pewter offers the possibility of an expanding audience for functional holloware. Once the stigma of a debased material is overcome by creative activity, pewter's economy of means could prove to be a catalyst for the renewed appreciation of the genre's value in expression. Michael Jerry's jewelry work is currently represented by Neil Isman Gallery in New York. — SB



Pewter coffee pot, 8 1/2 x 6 1/2 x 5 1/2", 1987; **right:** *Pewter coffee pot*, 8 1/2 x 3 1/2 x 7", 1987

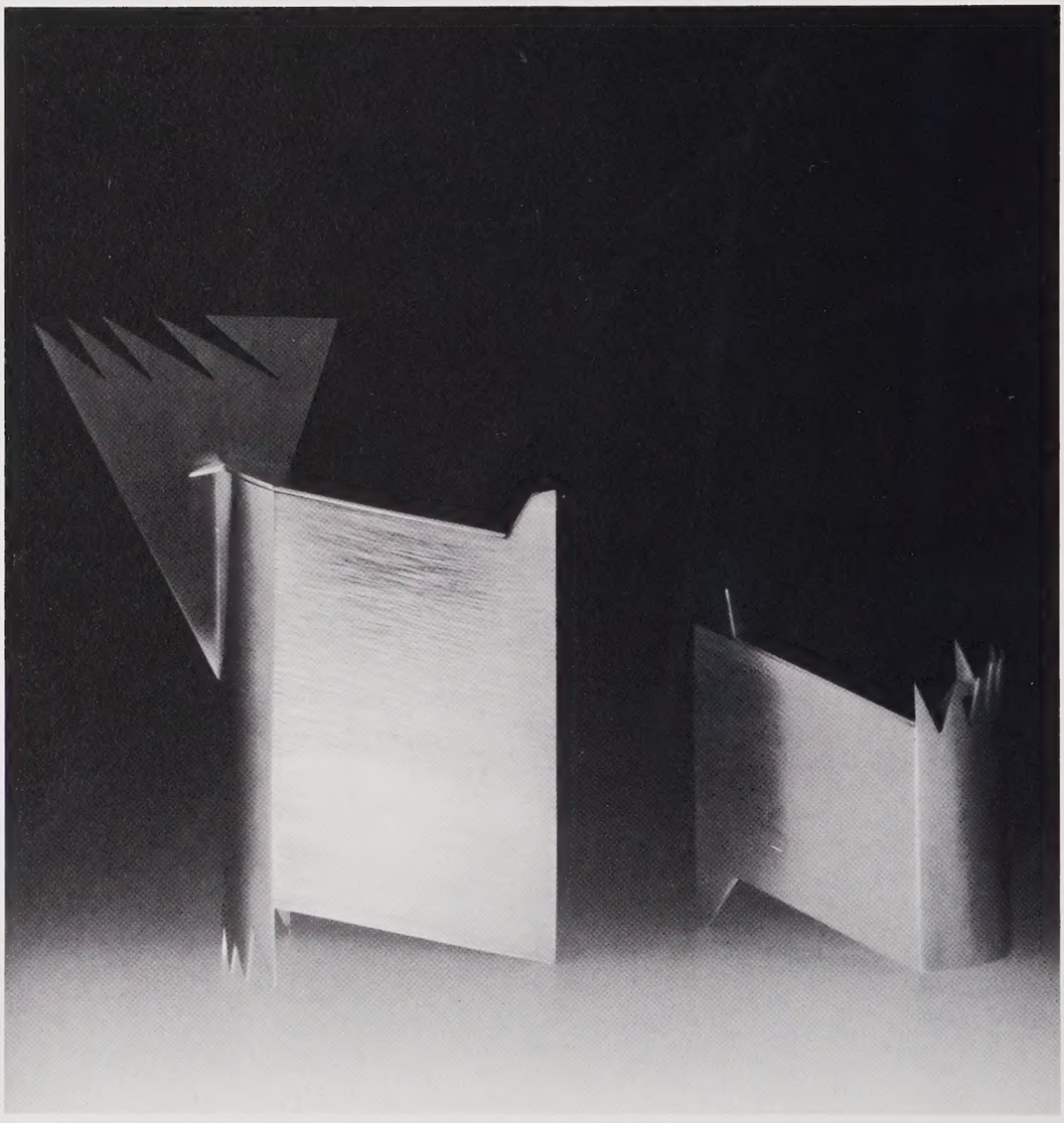
PEWTER
Expedient Economical Spontaneous



Pewter coffee pot, 7 x 2 3/4 x 10", 1988; **right:** *Pewter coffee pot*, 5 x 4 x 10 1/2", 1988

SUSAN EWING

FORMS FOR THOUGHT AND SOMETIMES FUNCTION

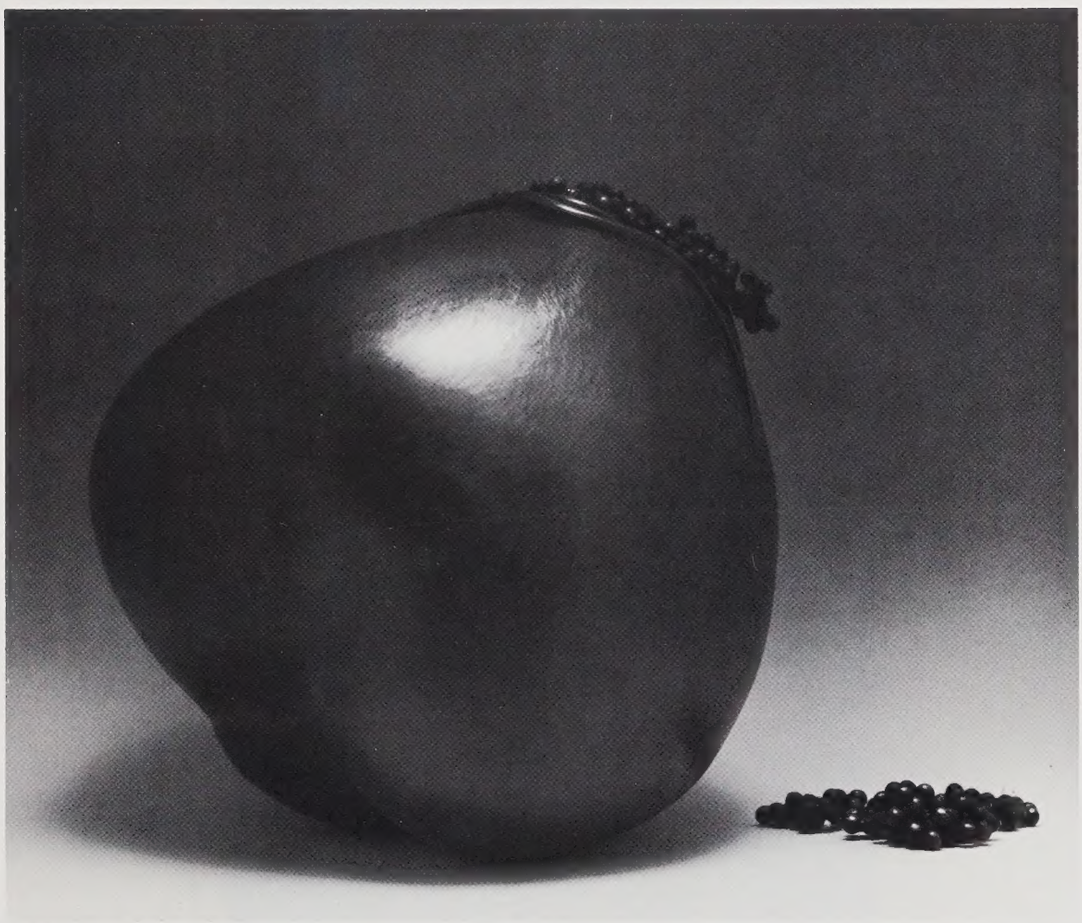


Susan Ewing's holloware works in copper, silver, brass and nickel are not only finely crafted but strong metaphorical suggestions as well. Although Ewing calls these pieces *Forms for Thought and Sometimes Function,* I am not so sure about the declaration of function in the traditional sense. At first glance, her sterling silver *Two Forms for Cream and Sugar* would seem an elegant addition to the table. Upon closer inspection, however, the spikes on these pieces do not seem particularly user-friendly but actually dangerous. Perhaps these are for dieters? The lid of the sugar container is hard to grasp and the interior could not accommodate much sugar, let alone a standard teaspoon. The creamer did not seem capable of holding much cream either. Indeed, these must be viewed as curious, beautiful wonders for a table of the imagination.

Equally evocative are the sculptures *Thorn with Form* and *Form with Roe.* Ewing's mastery of her materials is evident in her confident handling of surfaces and glorious patinas. The use of more than one metal is enhancing rather than merely embellishing. Again, though, it is the ability of these pieces to take the viewer beyond an admiration of the craft and form wherein their true power lies. In what strange land did these "specimens" grow? Sexually charged, mysterious and compelling, these pieces seem like products of some extraterrestrial garden, a place worth visiting but certainly not if one were alone at night.

—Mary Hamilton

Susan Ewing's holloware and sculptures were shown in a solo exhibit at Sandford Gallery, Clarion, PA from March 27 to April 20, 1988.



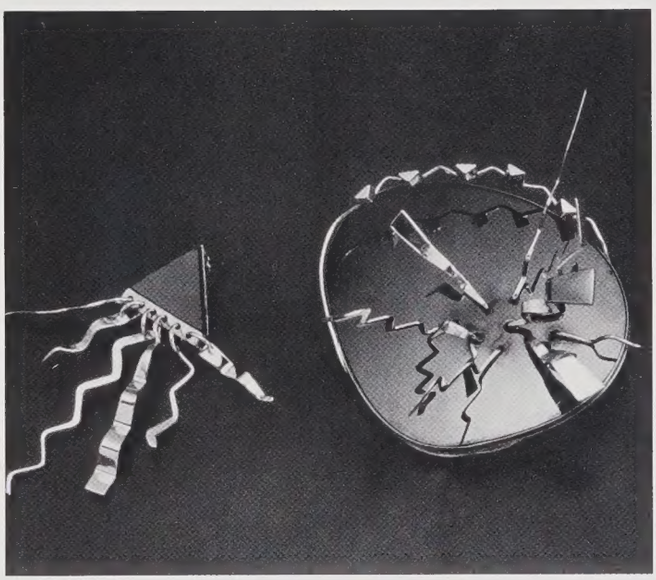
Opposite: *Two Forms for Cream and Sugar*, sterling silver—creamer 5 1/2 x 3 1/2 x 2 1/2"; sugar 2 1/2 x 2 1/2 x 2 1/2", 1985. Photo: Rick Potteiger; **top:** *Thorn with Form*, copper, brass, 3 1/2 x 4 1/2 x 4", 1985. **above:** *Form with Roe*, copper, steel, 7 x 8 x 6", 1984. Photos: Stevie Grand

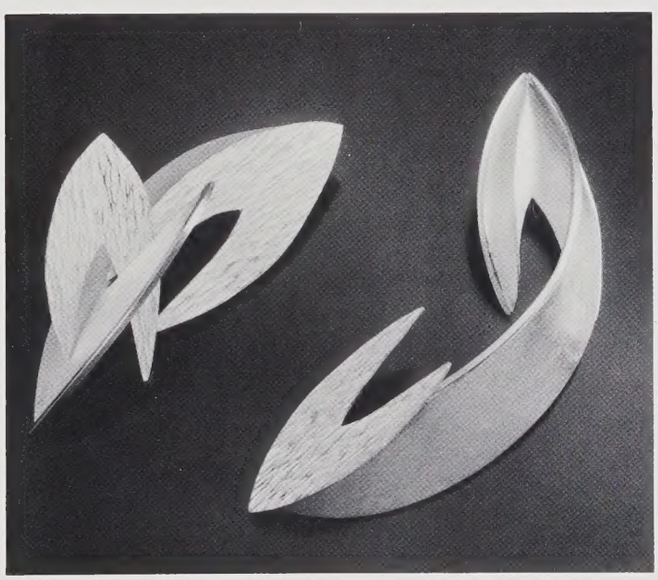
PROJECTS OF EXPLORATION: STUDENT WORK PROJECT 4: VISUAL INTRICACY

This is the fourth in a series of projects for students, created to provide a forum in *Metalsmith* for provocative and innovative work. The projects will be assigned by a different professor each time. In this way, we hope to spotlight issues in all areas of metalwork, from sculpture to body adornment, from scale to preciousness. This fourth project was assigned by William Harper, Professor of Art, Florida State University at Tallahassee. The problem was to create a pair of earrings that does not match but that each complements the other when they are worn together.

Information on the assignment for the next project appears at the end of the article.

I have always been fascinated by the great monumental earrings of certain archaic cultures—the superhuman assemblage ear ornaments of gold and stones in the pharonic falcons from Tut's tomb; the Estruscans' almost mystical configurations of shimmery gold granulation and chain; or the miraculous earspools of bone, shell and inlaid stones from ancient Peru. The Fulani people of Mali still make the huge 14k gold, triple-bladed ornaments that have an almost Grand Guignol sense of danger as the weight distends the ear, held by the red silk wrapped piercer. The size and elegance of the silk's menacing gold blades combined with the blood-red silk cannot but stimulate a sense of erotic pain to Western eyes. None of these pieces was easy to wear.





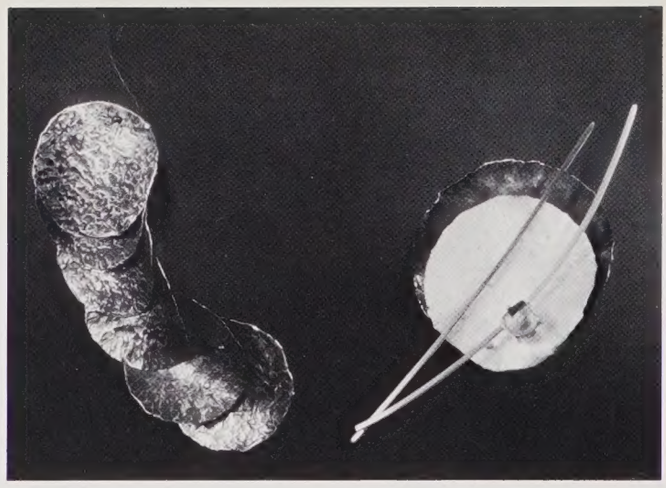
Opposite: Kelley Reese, *Untitled*, silver, shaped plastic, 6 x 3″. Photo: Shari Mendelson; **top:** Linda Oliver-Matt, *The Whole Note*, sterling silver, 18 x 8 x 12″ on average. Model: Debi Drew; **center:** Liz Kreutzberger, *Earrings*, sterling silver, mirrored sunglass lenses—larger earring 2 1/2 x 2 x 1″. Photo: Tom Muir; **above:** Margaret Boor, *Earrings*, silver, 14k gold, 1 1/4 x 2 1/4″

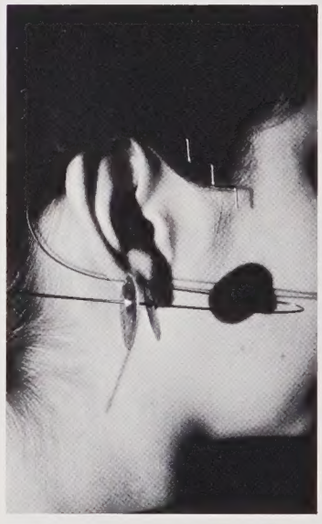
They required commitment on the part of the wearer, a commitment of discomfort and even pain in the preparation of the earlobe and then even more commitment in the actual act of wearing them. It is true that some of these jewels were meant for burial purposes, but more often they were meant to be worn by the elite of the culture as a sign of power, as an act of ceremony. These were complex adornments, symbolizing wealth, power, taste and/or style, commitment, perhaps even psycho-sexual overtones. They were grandly theatrical, spectacular both on and off the body.

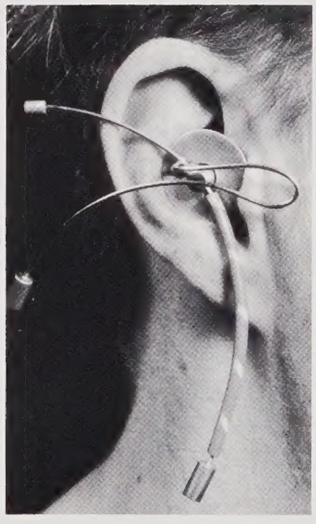
With these thoughts, I assigned this visual intricacy problem. There were more than 50 entries, but surprisingly few seemed to focus on the concept of intricacy. The majority of pieces were simply conceptually weak, seeming to organize themselves into two groups-either the school of late 80s cliché-style zig-zags, triangles and wire spiral—swarmed-over Memphis, with the obligatory strip of anodized aluminum; or the school of jewelry that begins and ends with technique, in this case, lamination of one boring shape onto another. There was also a third sub-group of "hang a lot of stuff together to dangle." The pieces I have chosen as finalists avoided these pitfalls and began instead with some type of visual idea—creativity, rather than the mere act of making something.

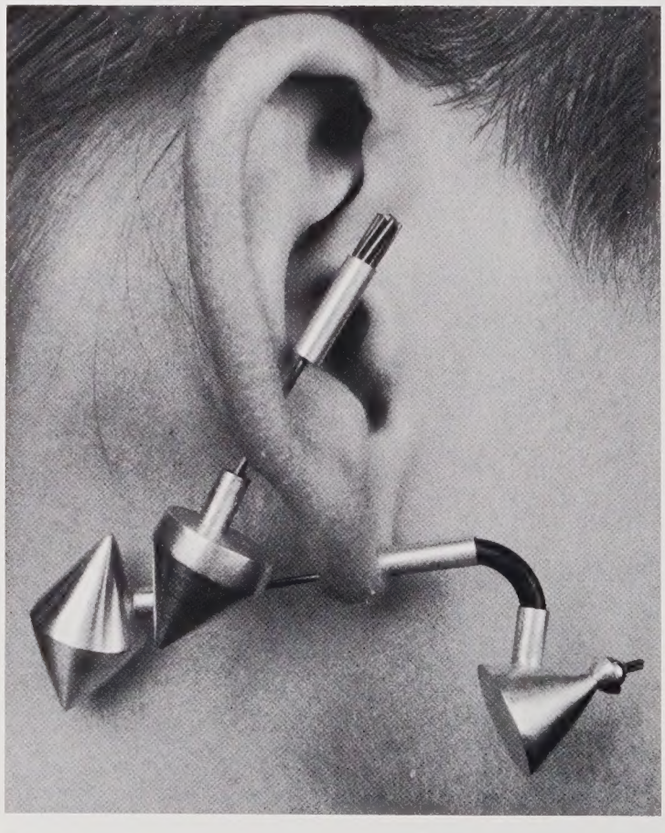
Linda Marie Oliver-Matt's *(University of Illinois, Champign-Urbana)* huge sculptual ornaments perhaps most reflect those attitudes of the archaic cultures—size, theatricality, commitment to the act of wearing—but this style is thoroughly 20th-century constructivism. She describes her intent as "to encompass not only the ear of the human body but the whole head and face with curvilinear lines. I feel that the simplistic line of the earrings forces the viewer to look not only at the wearer, but also the space around the wearer."

The silver and shaped-plastic pieces by Kelley Reese *(Maryland Institute College of Art)* also interact sculpturally with the body, but by wrapping around the neck, they define it, setting the head apart. They are not only earrings, but also a kind of









Top: Karin Bockenhauer, *Earrings*, silver, gold, tourmaline, oxidized, 3 x 1″; **center, left:** Erika Ayala, *Microcosms of Enormous Silence*, stainless steel, gold leaf, paper, 6 x 3 x 3″. Photo: Jeff Hofmann; **center, right:** Jeffry Azha Saidin, *Earrings*, sterling silver, brass, wire-way (blue), sand-blasted, 3 1/2 x 1 1/2 x 1/4″; **above:** Leslie Ott, *Place Them Here*, sterling silver, niobium, hollow castings, 2 x 1/2″. Photo: Jay Jerva

torque, a simple neckline with a flourish of elegant surprise at the ear.

In terms of pure elegance and dramatic wearability, four entries distinguished themselves as a group. Liz Kreutzberger *(Center for Creative Studies, Detroit, MI)* wished "to express the process of confusion and noise entering through one reluctant ear and filtering out in a screened, orderly fashion through the other." The "reluctant" part is kinetic, while the filter is really a mirrored sunglass lense set with silver elements. These meet every aspect of the problem brilliantly—an idea with wit!

Margaret Boor's *(San Diego State University)* pieces of silver and 14k gold are the most volume-oriented. Again, extremely elegant, flowing forms define the line of the jaw, enclosing the face. These are full, robustly formal pieces that stress monumentality without appearing to be weighty.

Kain Bochenhauer's *(San Diego State University)* silver, gold and tourmaline pair are primarily concerned with heavily textured cascading discs, which again define the jawline and the face. They are fragile in feeling without sacrificing significant size.

Erika Ayala's *(University of Michigan)* surprisingly simple pieces of stainless steel, gold leaf and paper surprise in choice of materials and delicacy of form yet retain a sense of drama through the implied danger of the act of wearing them—the tensile stainless wire tauntly balanced through the lobe.

The entries by Jeffrey Saiden *(University of Michigan)*, and Leslie Ott *(Center for Creative Studies, Detroit, MI)* share similar intent. Visually, they are the simplest pieces of those being discussed. Certainly they could not really be classified as visually intricate. However, I have chosen to include them because of the manner in which they can be worn in the same ear, or in separate ears. This versatility would seem to preclude too much extravagant detail, but rather, necessitates a more open form of design organization.

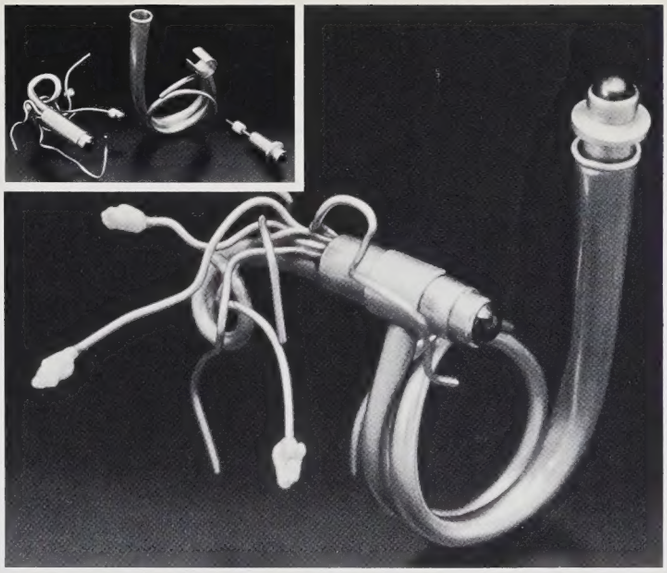
It is rare that a real sense of wit ever enters the realm of jewelry. Many pieces attempt to be funny or humorous, often engaging in poor punning, but light, witty statements are rare,

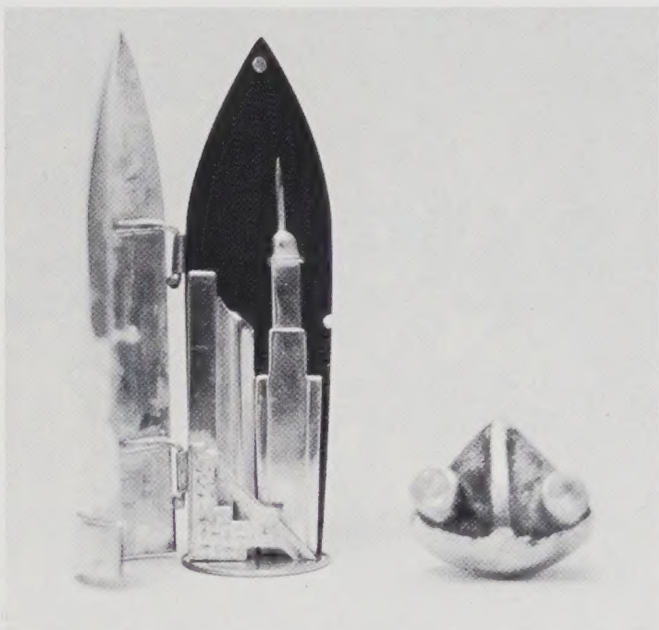
especially if they have slightly darker undertones. The final three entries to be discussed possess this characteristic.

Elizabeth S. Westerman's *(Center for Creative Studies, Detroit, MI) Cephalopod with "Dead Man's Finger"* is really two pieces (or three!) in one. It is a ring, which, when disassembled, assumes various configurations, either together or separately. Although small when worn on the ear, the entire object has an uniformity that is unique among the entries.

Lanie Todd *(Maryland Institute College of Art)* entitles her entry *Cities in Flight*. Composed of a "starship" and a "dust mask," the piece concerns itself with the Earth's future and how some of us will have a means of escape, and others will have to cope with being left behind. This is undoubtedly the most difficult of all the works discussed, both in its conception and its wearability. Conceptually, it deals with sociological psychological fears, big ideas not easily tackled by "the precious realm of body adornment." To further complicate matters, one seems to become lopsided when wearing them. In addition, they invite the viewer to get close to the wearer, to perhaps reach out, to touch, to invade privacy by touch. This can be disconcerting to many people, when relative strangers pass a certain boundary of "look but don't touch." These earrings are so novel, so loaded with intent, that one must expect such actions on behalf of the viewer. But then when one would wear such unique work, she must expect attention from the curious. The psychology involved in wearing the unusual is more complex than that of wearing the usual status-symbol adornment.

As a final burst of the outrageous neo-dada or late 20th-century surrealism—we have Rebecca Coldren's *(University of Michigan) Fish Earrings,* although earplugs, would be a better description! They are in a class by themselves—a zany creation that goes beyond taste—good or bad—but certainly not indifferent. They exemplify jewelry for the brave, for the uninhibited, with no sense of the pretentious "jewelry-as-performance" school. They make us laugh, force us to question body adornment. They brighten our day.—*William Harper*





Top, inset: Elizabeth Westerman, *Cephalopod with "Dead Man's Finger,"* ring, when disassembled becomes earrings (see below); silver, freshwater pearls, hematite, 2 x 1 x 1/2". Photo: Tom Muir; **center:** Lanie Todd, *Cities in Flight*, sterling silver, niobium, brass, copper mesh, cubic zirconium, cast and fabricated—ship, 2 x 1/2". Photo: Shari Mendelson; **above, left and right:** Rebecca Coldren, *Fish Earrings*, attached to spongy earplugs that hold tight to ears; earrings fit into a middle piece when not in use, sterling silver, cast—head 1", tail 3 1/2". Photo: Scott Lankton, Christopher Grandell

PROJECT 5: HONOR SOMETHING ORDINARY

Project 5 is presented by Lynda Watson-Abbott, Professor of Metals and Jewelry, Cabrillo College, Aptos, CA.

Project: To honor something ordinary with a wearable piece of jewelry or a functional object. Jewelry/metal has been used historically to honor famous people or commemmorate notable events or accomplishments. Here is your opportunity to immortalize someone or something *you* think is wonderful or important.

Think about food, places, events, activities, objects or friends that are special to you—and maybe you alone. How could you best represent or symbolize your chosen subject? Think about traditional ways of showing importance or drawing attention. What else could you do? The materials and format you use should be appropriate to, and enhance, the message.

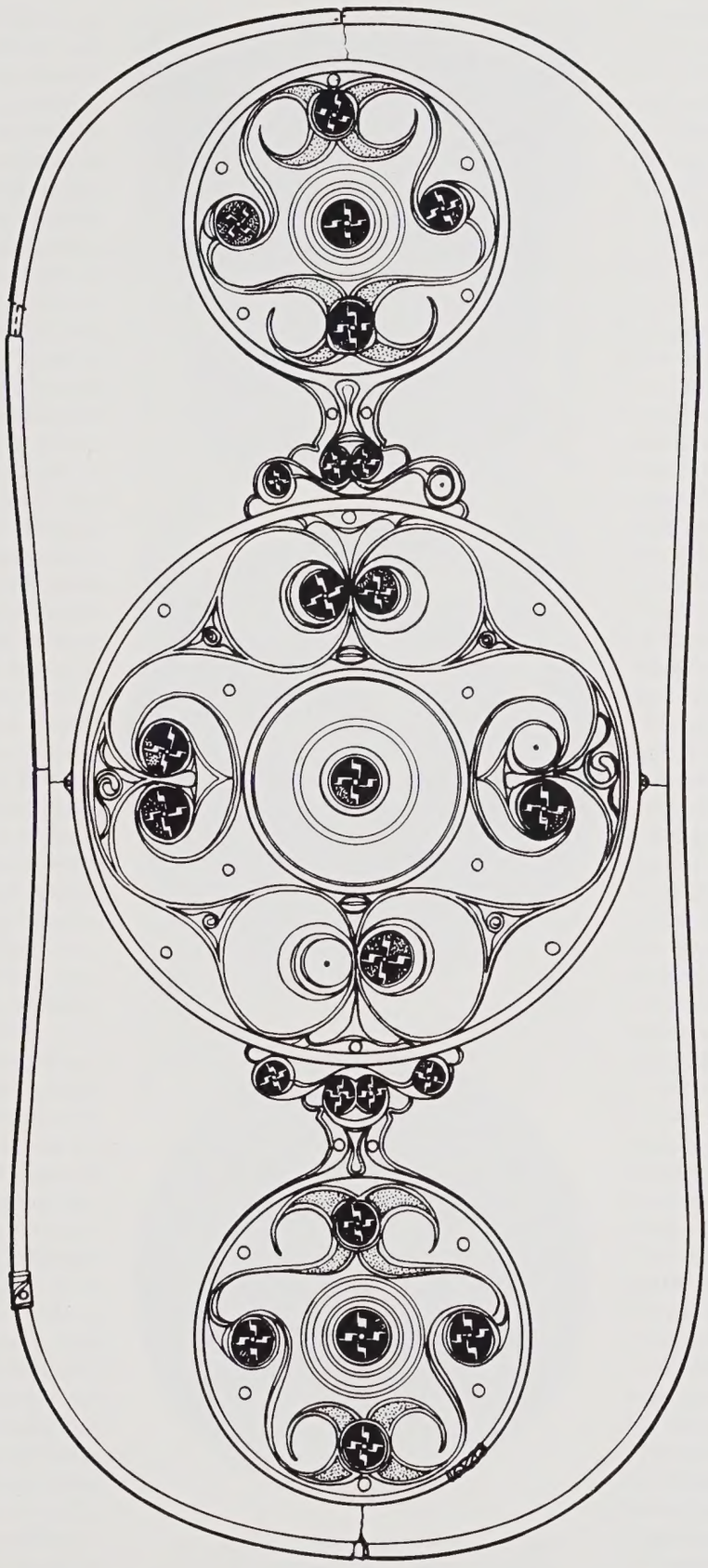
Deadline for submission is December 1, 1988. Students must be currently enrolled in a metals program at the undergraduate or graduate level. Black-and-white photographs and/or 35mm slides documenting the work should be forwarded to: Lynda Watson-Abbott, 418 Darwin Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95062.

Photographs/slides must be accompanied by: 1. maker's name 2. college or university (indicate undergraduate or graduate) 3. address and telephone number 4. title of work 5. pertinent descriptive information 6. materials/technique 7. dimensions 8. date completed 9. photo credit 10. statement of intent.

IMPORTANT: Photographs are critical to the success of your work in print. Please pay attention to lighting, composition, focus and background color.

THE ART OF THE CELTIC METALSMITH

The island is well peopled, full of houses, built after the manner of the Gauls, and abounds in cattle.
They use brass money, and iron rings of a certain weight.
The provinces remote from the sea produce tin, and those upon the coast, iron . . .
—Julius Ceasar



Opposite: *Desborough Mirror,* 18-gauge bronze, 35 cm 1., 1st century A.D.
Photo courtesy British Museum;
above: *Battersea Shield,* diagram, circa 90 cm 1,. early 1st century AD

by David Peterson

This research paper was presented at the Society of North American Goldsmiths Conference at Cranbrook Academy of Art in June, 1987. All photographs and illustrations are by the author, unless otherwise noted.

Celtic Metalsmithing in Britain

Bronze technology came to Britain long before the second millennium BC, but it was not until the coming of the British Iron Age, around 500 BC, that the insular tradition of bronzesmithing (as well as goldsmithing) achieved true preeminence. British metalwork, and that of Continental Gaul, developed along roughly parallel lines until the second century BC. In its infancy Celtic art borrowed heavily from Greek and Estruscan designs (i.e., the palmette/lotus frieze), but, in due course, there evolved a uniquely Celtic sensibility known today as La Tene. The La Tene style is characterized by an elegant, albeit daedalian, arrangement of scrolls, swelling lobes and palmette variations. La Tene ornamentation was not confined to Celtic jewelry but also embellished objects of utility including (but not restricted to) weapons, armour and horse-trappings. Celtic metalsmiths must have enjoyed an eminent status within their social hierarchy. As the Druid performed the role of philosopher/priest, the metalsmith was both artist and technologist, maintaining a repertoire of techniques so extensive that researchers today have yet to interpret them all.

The decorative bronze mirrors of the early first century AD perhaps best exemplify the accomplishments of Celtic craftsman in the south of Britain. Of the numerous examples that comprise the "Western Mirror School," the Desborough Mirror is one of the most complete. Its most striking feature is the ornate, symmetrical pattern engraved upon the mirror's back. The intense interplay of positive and negative space, so characteristic in La Tene art, appears more the product of impulse than of reason, yet the entire composition can be reduced to a rational system of aligned compass arcs. The design is enriched with zones of finely engraved "basket-hatching," a checkered pattern composed of short, parallel strokes, typically three abreast, which alternate at right angles from each adjacent set. The 18-gauge plate of the mirror is attached to a decorative, cast handle, used for hanging as well as holding, and a narrow, cylindrical frame.

Top: *Aylesford Bucket,* bronze, 30 cmh., 1st century B.C. Photo courtesy British Museum; **center:** *Bronze Disc,* 28 cm d., 1st century BC; **above:** *Battersea Shield* (detail of central roundel from previous page), 29 cm d. Photos courtesy British Museum

Quite a different object, the Aylesford Bucket, predates the mirror by as much as a century and may have been in use at least that many years. Stylistically, it is far removed from the flamboyance of the Western Mirror School. The topmost of the three bronze bands is decorated in repeating, low-relief images, which include stylized bird heads and a curious pair of mythical beasts. Close examination of the band reveals the presence of subtle vertical ridges between each repeating image, providing a clue as to how the designs were achieved. As in modern die-forming processes, the thin bronze strip would have been driven into a set of dies of "formers," allowing the reproduction of several, identical embossments. While not widespread, this technique nevertheless represents an intriguing overture to modern mass production. Chasing and repoussé were widely practiced throughout Europe. One of the most striking examples of this tradition is the mysterious bronze disc from Ireland. Like that of the Aylesford Bucket, its precise function remains an enigma, although it probably served a spiritual rather than utilitarian function. The Battersea Shield, by contrast, had an obvious military function, although its elaborate design may suggest that it was intended for parade purposes only. It is composed of three decorative roundels, repoussé in high relief and affixed to a large, unadorned bronze facing. The entire structure was once secured to a wooden backing by means of rivets and a U-section binding that surrounds the entire shield. Highly stylized "stag" heads link the large, central roundel to the smaller, outer panels. Could these be related to the strange horned beasts on the Aylesford Bucket? All three roundels exhibit highly developed palmette variations, interlocking S-curves, and 27 small, circular elements, each containing an elaborate swastika, into which a malleable red enamel has been cast. "Enamel" is in this case misleading, because the glass could not have been fired in the conventional way, but instead was heated until soft and "pressed" into the cells.

Of the myriad brooches, bracelets and necklaces produced in Celtic workshops, no form of jewelry is more significant nor enigmatic than the torc. In Britain, and on the Continent, torcs (or "torques") were wi-

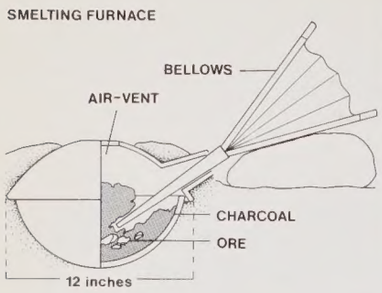
despread and of great social importance. They are occasionally associated with women, although Greek and Roman chronicles most often describe them as adorning male warriors in battle. To that end, consider the "Dying Gaul" from Pergamun, the famous Hellenistic sculpture that depicts a fatally wounded Celtic warrior wearing only his torc. The torc is best described as a neckring, typically rigid and often quite massive, owing its name to the twisted wires that comprise the "hoop" of the most common variety. In most cases the hoop forms a solid split-ring, capped with decorative terminals, which must be spread apart to be worn, although a few rare examples make use of joints and mechanisms to facilitate easier wear and removal. While bronze, iron and occasionally even silver torcs have been found, Britain's magnificent gold/electrum torcs most impress and provoke the modern sensibility. Many scholars contend that these, the grandest of torcs, could not have existed for mere mortal adornment but rather suggest a votive function. I remain skeptical of such theories, however, and, considering this very "human" scale of the torcs and the directness with which they address wearability, believe it far more likely that these torcs denoted an elevated social status as do the Crown Jewels today. It is also worth noting that, in almost every case, the individual weight of Britain's gold torcs conform to a basic unit of measure known to have been established in prehistoric Europe. In fact, several torcs appear to have had their weight bolstered, after manufacture, by the addition of scrap gold. This weight conformity may suggest that these torcs had a secondary function as units of special-purpose currency.

Perhaps Celtic Britain's greatest treasure is the spectacular Snettisham Torc, recovered in 1950 at Ken Hill, Snettisham. The torc is made entirely of electrum and weighs fully 1085 grams. Its hoop is comprised of eight twisted strands; each strand being made from eight tightly twisted wires. Its hollow terminals were separately cast, using the lost-wax method, and soldered onto the ends of the hoop. Both terminals exhibit the same richly defined La Tene ornamentation with two particularly noteworthy features. Between the low-relief lobes and ridges lie zones of basket-weave "matting," which bear an unmistakable resemblance to the ornament of the Western Mirror School (i.e., Desborough Mirror).

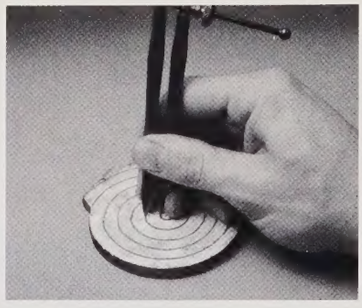
From top: *Snettisham Torc,* 20 cm d., 1st century BC; *Needwood Forest Torc,* 18 cm d., 1st century BC; *Ipswich Torcs,* 18-20 cm d., 1st century BC

Upon the matted zones are found three concentric "bulls-eye" bosses and 20 small spherical bosses. Each spherical boss, in turn, bears three fine indentations or "dimples," which were punched in after casting. This scant feature might be ignored if it were not that two other torcs, one from Sedgford (in Norfolk) and the other from Cairmuir (in Peebleshire), bear the exact same marks. Considering how subtle and peculiar a detail this is, could it not represent a form of benchmark, struck on all three torcs by a single craftsman? In addition, the overall stylistic and technical treatment of these torcs suggests that they were almost certainly products of a single atelier, and the same might be said for many others. It may be possible to affix a firm date to the manufacture of the Snettisham torc, as one of its hollow terminals contains a small coin, inexplicably included at the time of manufacture, which has now been identified as a Gallo-Belgic coin minted between the years 50 and 25 BC.

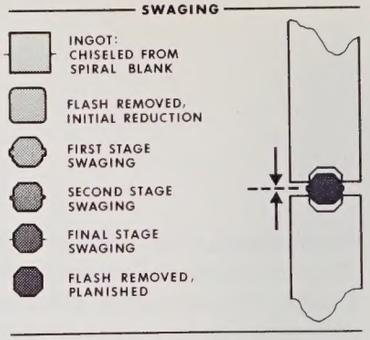
A different type of multistrand torc was found at Needwood Forest, Staffordshire, not far from Glascote where a second was unearthed. They may be dated to the same period as the Snettisham torc, their loose weave and rather awkward design suggests that they were the products of a less accomplished workshop. The Ipswich torcs, however, share an East Anglian provenance with the Snettisham torc, as well as a common esthetic. The group consists of five electrum torcs recovered in 1968 and a sixth found a short distance away in 1970 (there are some questions as to whether the sixth can be judged as belonging to the same hoard). As with other hoards, it is likely that the torcs were originally buried for safekeeping; the goldsmith (or thief) being unable to later recover the goods. This scenario is consistent with the theory that the Ipswich torcs may represent a studio's "work-in-progress," as evidenced by the apparently unfinished state of torcs no. 2 through no. 5. This point has not been made without some debate, but I am confident that it remains the most reasonable explanation for the group's widely disparate surfaces, ranging from "as cast" to finely burnished. As works-in-progress, these torcs provide a unique glimpse into the methodology of Celtic metalsmithing in the first century BC and served as a springboard for my own investigation into ancient studio practices.

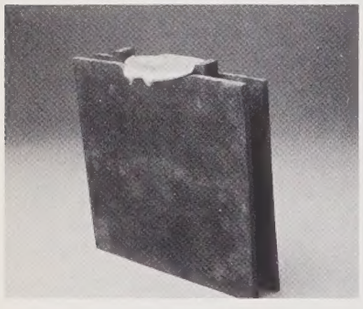


Disassembling mold



Tracing spiral on ingot with calipers

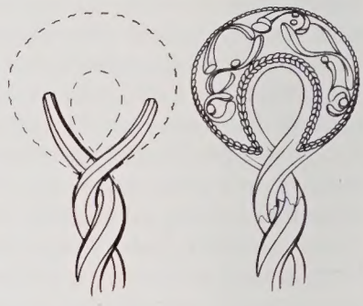




Freshly cast ingot in mold

Ingot removed from mold

Chiseling along spiral



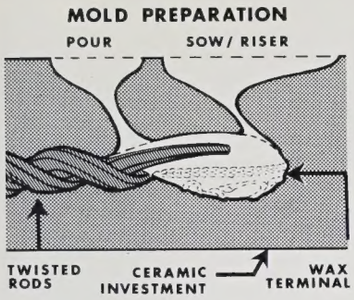
Technical Reconstruction of an "Ipswich-type" Torc

Technical reconstructions are, in essence, a synthesis between academic theory and the creative process. They can either substantiate or refute theories regarding technical development and the possible methods of manufacture for those artifacts under examination. In the case of the Ipswich torcs, conclusions might also be reached regarding whether the torcs were, in fact, complete or at an intermediate stage of production. The technical reconstruction described below is based upon an earlier examination conducted for the British Museum in 1972 by J.E. Stapley of London Polytechnic. Stapley attempted to reproduce a partial Ipswich-style torc under reasonably authentic conditions. In his report to the Prehistoric Society he described in precise detail each step undertaken and the results achieved. While his efforts in general substantiated a number of concerns, several problems occurred in the course of this experiment, which, by his own admission, led to inconclusive results on a few key points. While visiting the British Museum in 1985, I was permitted to examine the physical results of his experiment and, in light of what his efforts had established, believed that a more conclusive result might be achieved under different circumstances. Upon returning from London, I set about assembling a primitive, Early Iron Age workshop, maintaining complete authenticity whenever possible. I patterned my tools and equipment after known artifacts and improvised where no models existed (i.e., wooden implements).

The first piece of equipment needed was a furnace for smelting and melting metal. Based upon a simple bowl furnace found at West Brandon, County Durham, I produced one consisting of two fired ceramic bowls, fitted together in clam-shell fashion. The top bowl had a central, circular opening, seven centimeters in diameter, and a 10-centimeter spoutlike tuyere through which forced air, from a bellows, would be introduced. The unit was partially buried and fueled with lump charcoal. Most copper ores must first be "roasted," prior to smelting, in an oxidizing atmosphere. The oxidized ore is then added to the charcoal, where it is reduced in the furnace's carbon-rich atmosphere. Additional fuel would be fed into the furnace as needed, with the top opening being partially covered by a sherd of broken pottery to control the amount of air exchange and, hence, control the furnace's temperature. A bellows would be mounted next to the furnace upon a large, flat, anchored stone (bellows-stones are commonly associated with smelting pits of this period), with its nozzle projecting down into the furnace by way of the tuyere. The exact type of bellows used in Celtic Britain is unknown, but a medium-sized modern hearth bellows will provide sufficient air flow for a furnace of this size, physical exhaustion notwithstanding. As sufficient temperatures are achieved (around 2000°F), the ore becomes molten and, as this furnace has no provision for tapping slag, a "bloom" of metal and slag collects on the furnace bottom. Once cool, the furnace is opened and the bloom removed and beaten, separating the brittle slag from the malleable copper globules. The pure copper is then ready to be remelted for casting in a ceramic crucible, using the same furnace and procedures.

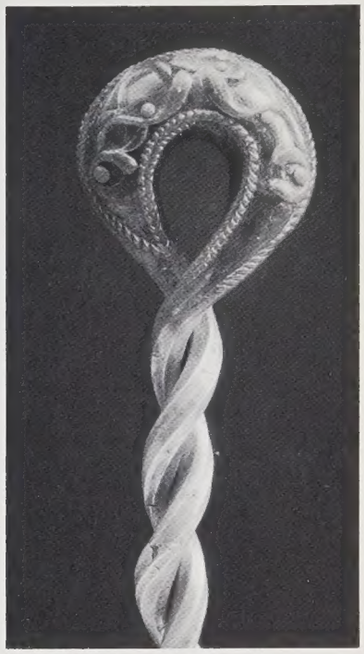
I decided to use pure copper in my initial experiment, as it smelting point reasonably approximates that of gold. The production of bronze requires only the inclusion of tin ore (Kasiterite) during the copper smelting process. Naturally occurring arsenic-bearing copper ores probably produced the first bronzes purely by accident. The improved hardness and lower melting point of arsenical bronze would have been quickly recognized and exploited by the Bronze Age artisan. It should be understood that, contrary to what many academicians would have us believe, primitive copper smelting is neither "simple" nor "readily achieved." In fact, the assertion that ancient cooking fires might have been responsible for the earliest, albeit accidental, smelting is absolutely absurd. My first attempt included several hours of fueling and "bellowing" by three diligent assistants and yet failed to produce a single drop of molten metal (although a small copper disc placed in the furnace as a control measure did show traces of reticulation). Subsequent tests established that a more uniform flow of air over a longer period of time was needed to achieve the necessary temperatures. As an alternative to slave-labor, I substituted compressed air for a bellows and, in time, achieved successful and predictable results. Larger furnaces must have existed in the early Iron Age, requiring a far more involved process than that described here. These larger furnaces may have been positioned on coastal banks and cliffs so as to utilize the steady ocean updrafts, channeling the air through an elaborate arrangement of *tuyeres*.

I produced several ingot types in both closed an open molds. The first samples proved to be terribly gassed and, even under the most judicious forging, could not withstand deformation without severe cracking. The vintage process of poling with a green-stick remedied this problem. A complex form of ingot, considered first by J.E. Stapley in his 1972 experiment, came from Theophilus's *Diverse Arts* and required the casting of a 10mm-thick disk, 80mm in diameter. To do this, a 10mm square iron rod was bent into a circular "horse-shoe" shape and sandwiched between two flat iron plates into which 465 grams of molten copper was then cast. The resulting blank was forged to a thickness of 9mm, to compress the cast structure. The blank was then coated with a thin film of whiting (calcium carbonate), through which a uniform spiral was scratched, on both faces, using a set of calipers. The spirals, serving as guides, were then cut along using a sharp iron chisel, alternating from face to face an annealing frequently. The iron chisels required resharpening three to fours times in the course of a round, which further complicated the process. In total. it took nearly seven hours before the blank was entirely chiseled through and the



Twisted swaged rods

Detail added to terminal



Chased and burnished cast terminal

Chiseling through ingot

Roughly modeled wax terminal

Freshly cast terminal

spiral uncoiled. The result was a roughly square rod, measuring 765mm in length and 9mm across each face. This was then further reduced to a 9mm round rod. The labor-intensive nature of this process prompted me to cast three simpler bar ingots that were then forged to the same length and cross-section. All of the samples produced varying but acceptable results, although the open stone-mold method was by far the most direct.

The next step involved forging the rods into a uniform, octagonal cross-section. While I find strong evidence to support the existence of smaller draw plates during the early British Iron Age, a plate as massive as that needed here, and the immense force required to draw such a rod, would have been unavailable during this period. Instead, it is more likely that the rods were given their final form by means of a swaging process. My swages were formed from two iron bars, 20mm square by 60mm in length. A short section of iron rod was first forged and polished to an octagonal cross-section, measuring 8mm across. A shallow, half-round groove was then filed squarely across the ends of both bars, producing a circular channel when brought together. The bars were then brought to red heat and, placing the cold octagonal rod in the channel between their opposing faces, hammered together creating half of an octagonal furrow in the end of each bar. Almost no additional refinement was necessary before the swages could be used. The swaging process itself was quite simple: with one swage anchored in a hardwood stump and the second positioned above it (with both furrows aligned), a 9mm round copper rod was struck with a five-pound sledge hammer. The entire length of rod was worked in this way, annealing as necessary. After three courses, the swage faces came squarely together and the octagonal rod was complete. A long fin of flashing developed along the sides of the rod where the swag halves met. In most cases this flashing simply fell off or was easily torn away. A final course of planishing compressed any remaining irregularities and completed the process.

Two lengths of octagonal rod were used to form the hoop of the torc. As Stapley had done before me, I first attempted a half-torc, in this case using two 350mm long copper rods that were slightly tapered on the ends by forging. The two rods were then twisted together in the manner of the Ipswich torcs. An examination of the torcs shows clearly that the terminals were not individually cast and soldered to the hoop but, in fact, cast directly onto the twisted rods using the lost-wax method. Using beeswax and bone modeling tools I modeled the decorative loop terminal onto the tapered ends of the hoop. A sprue channel (or "pour") was attached near one of the rod/terminal junctions and a riser attached near the other. The entire piece was then encased in a ceramic investment mold of two-parts clay to one-part finely ground pot sherds. The mold was allowed to dry thoroughly before being slowly fired to burn out the wax. After "burn out," the mold was heated to approximately 1500F to harden it against breaking during the pour and facilitating better fusing of the molten metal to the twisted rods. Molten copper was then cast into the "pour" where it filled the mold cavity. A complete casting was indicated when molten metal flowed up and out of the "riser." After the cooled casting was broken from the mold, its surface was chased with a small iron tool, particularly at the junction of the rods and cast-on terminals. The piece was further refined by stoning with basalt and fine sand, followed by a final burnishing.

The finished reconstruction proved to be a reasonably accurate facsimile of a torc type common to East Anglia in the First century BC, specifically represented by the Ipswich hoard. Before a final determination can be reached, the facsimile must be compared to the actual torcs at the British Museum. However, as notes and detailed photographs provide some basis for comparison, a provisional conclusion is offered here. The twisted rods of the reconstructed "hoop" display the same surface irregularities as those noted in the actual artifacts, particularly the minute surface cracks resulting from an overstressed (forged) casting and the longitudinal defects marking the meeting points of the swages. As the Ipswich torcs were made of electrum (a natural alloy of gold and silver), they did not experience any appreciable deterioration in the two-thousand years since they were made. It is possible, therefore, to make an accurate assessment of the group's original surface quality and determine a sequence of methodology from the existing tool marks and defects. The hoop/terminal junction of the facsimile torc exhibited the same irregular "burned-on" appearance, before chasing, as the least finished of the Ipswich torcs. After the junction was chased, however, it more closely parallels Ipswich torc no. 1, commonly regarded as the most complete. I believe this strongly supports the concept that the Ipswich torcs remain, in part, unfinished. When compared to the Snettisham torc, in fact, there is so great a disparity in surface quality that it is difficult to imagine the Ipswich torcs ever having been considered complete (although speculating on an artist's always original intention, particularly within the mind set of an ancient culture, is always a dangerous business). This reconstruction further established the feasibility of the processes described, including the manufacture of the octagonal rods and the direct "casting-on" of the terminals, under the technical limitations of the period.

Acknowledgments

I wish to thank the staff of the British Museum, especially Dr. Ian Stead, Deputy Keeper of the Department of Romano-British Antiquities, and Mrs. Janet Lang of the Research Laboratory, who so graciously lent their time and insight when this study first began. I must also acknowledge Purdue University for its generous assistance through research grants and, of course, The Society of North American Goldsmiths who made bringing all of this together possible.

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FESTIVE, VISCERAL, HUMANIZING, ~~INTELLECTUAL~~, OR ONE-LINERS?

by Lisa Bernfield

What is the purpose of a SNAG conference? Why do people come? What are their expectations? Why do some cease to come? Were their expectations not met? Each conference chairman imprints his/her vision onto the conference. He sets the tone, whether it be festive, intellectual, questioning, self-questioning, informative, demonstrative or social.

A SNAG gathering is a rare thing. For 12 months of the year the average metalsmith labors in a basement studio, coping (in cloistered bliss) with paperwork, slides, deadlines and assorted business complexities. Then the SNAG conference rolls around and hundreds of metalsmiths flock together to prove they are not alone. But always there is some disenchantment. Some grumble it's not intellectual enough, others complain it is too political, too social and that the same people (academics) are running the show. Other discussions center on the content of *Metalsmith* or the current polemic between full-time metalsmiths and academics.

SNAG '88, coordinated by Tim McCreight and held at Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs, New York, was a different kind of conference. It was SNAG's 20th Anniversary celebration. Festivity was a major theme, reflection on the past a necessity and talks of the future inevitable. Conclusions and solutions? No. Questioning? Yes. Introspection? Yes. Festivity? Yes. Intellectualism? No time.

Instead, the audience was constantly flooded with one-liners (pithy generalizations posing moral questions), i.e., Why am I me and not you? Who are you—someone who makes things happen, someone who watches things happen or someone who wonders what happened? . . . Life is uncertain; eat dessert first. This moralizing approach, appealing to one's sense of guilt and values could have been offensive and one might question its use at a conference. The intent was to send the conferees back to their studios with a new kind of motivation, a stronger sense of self, a raising of consciousness, a rejuvenation of energy, the gusto to be all one can be. Most SNAG conferences employ an alternative approach, one which conveys factual information that provokes and promotes intellectual discussions and that brings newfound depth to an artist's work. The latter format is expected and looked forward to. Yet, let us examine the merit of the first approach.

Both methods stimulate, one on an intellectual level and one with a sense of "interiorness": not something that can be pinpointed but felt, not factual but visceral. The introspective point of view is sensitizing. It allows for an opening of the psyche. As a result, barriers are weakened, homogeneity and assurance established; all are in the same boat. The myth of "superiority" (strength based on knowledge and experience) is disbanded. Every artist possesses the same allegiance to the craft. The responsibility is to defy mediocrity. The format of continuous one-liners allows for introspection instead of showmanship. The result was humanizing. A feeling of ease, warmth, comradery and equality—a community. The debate between academic metalsmiths and full-time jewelers ceased for a small time. Hierarchies were ignored and dismissed (slides were not shoved in the faces of metalsmithing "mafia" dignitaries) and more revealing, less formal discussions began. True celebration could occur; one could relax; one did not have to perform; all intellectual intimidation had been eschewed. A true gift-giving process occurred. The gift was an exposing of our real feelings resulting in a bringing together of people—a bond. The gift of leaving one's ego at home allowed for festivity without self-consciousness.

So, when David LaPlantz opened the conference with his lecture, "If Who's On First, Then Where Are You?" he was setting the tone for the conference through his tirade of one-liners, cliches and moral questioning. "Is winning something we try to do to impress others? if that is the only reason to win, I'd rather play another game. I'm not out to impress others or to puff up my own ego. I can do that by winning inside . . . Keep focused on that which is special, unique and vital to your spiritual, intellectual and technical growth. These are the truths to attain and all the rest of life's riches, including respect from your peers, will be an automatic given. Your spirit will thank you for discovering just who you are working for and who you wish to impress. Is that you? If not, why not?" David LaPlantz depicted here the type of internal self-questioning that is inevitable from lectures based on questions instead of answers. What continued this tone and its resulting mood (discussed already) was a similarity in approach to didacticism by the lecturers following. Even before the lectures began, the titles alluded to the type of conference that would occur (i.e., "A Self-Examination: Reaching for Spiritual Expression, 'Gentle Solitude'" by Hiroko Sato Pijanowski, "The Creative and the Precious" by Howard Evans). Tim McCreight's choice to have two out of the eight major lectures given by nonmetalsmiths—Gioia Timpanelli, writer and storyteller, who enlightened as well as entertained, adding to the visceral and festive, and Lewis Hyde, author of *The Gift: Imagination and the Erotic Life of Property,* who defined the properties and consequences of the gift-giving, process and explained how a gift establishes bonds among people—showed that the emphasis for the conference was on the visceral and festive, not the technical and intellectual. The introduction of the tool auction further developed this theme. Each tool was a donation to raise money for SNAG—a gift passed from the isolation of the studio to the interactive environment of the group. Its sale, repossession and return to isolation, brought with it the magic of the gift. The gift had been shared—not hoarded—thus keeping its creative spirit alive. The viability of the group was assured, and pageantry and entertainment were created for the conferees.

Deepening the sense of community and making the experience more humanizing was an admission among the lecturers of their fears and vulnerabilities. David LaPlantz expressed how he was almost crushed by the process of writing his book. He stated that he got so tired that he started liking it. "I liked feeling numb." Bruce Baker and Patricia Daunis-Dunning admitted how they are still apprehensive before shows. Hiroko Sato Pijanowski revealed, "Of the approximately 25 students in the department of metalsmithing at that time (Cranbrook Academy of Art, 1966), I was one of the least promising. I was certain that I had chosen the wrong direction, since it seemed obvious that I had no talent in that field." In general, people are accepting of and believe in what people in positions of leadership say no matter how inconceivable it might seem. Since similar doubts were shared, intimidation was subdued and empathy felt. The leaders of the conference, by admitting their insecurities, heightened the tie, allowing for sharing to occur.

Let's return to the beginning question: What does one want from a conference? Seeing that it was SNAG's 20th Anniversary, a festive occasion, the format seemed appropriate. So, it was not intellectual, yet it allowed for a freer atmosphere, bringing communication to a new level. Maybe once in a while we need this cohesiveness so that SNAG can exist and that our work can flourish. To end with a one-liner seems appropriate. Howard Evans stated that it was necessary to "seek out the companionship of the community you find yourself in and improve your ability to stay in trusting contact with it for longer and longer periods of time, asking that you will discover along the path, what you are supposed to make next, where your preciousness lies."

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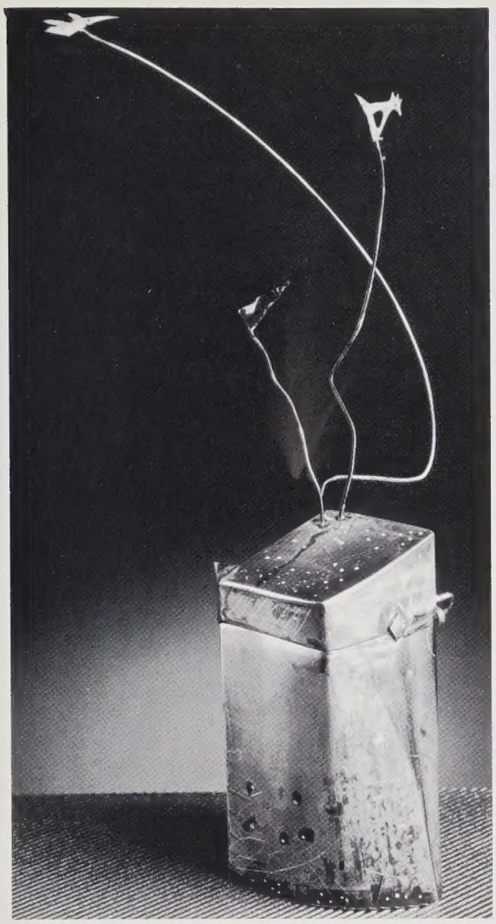
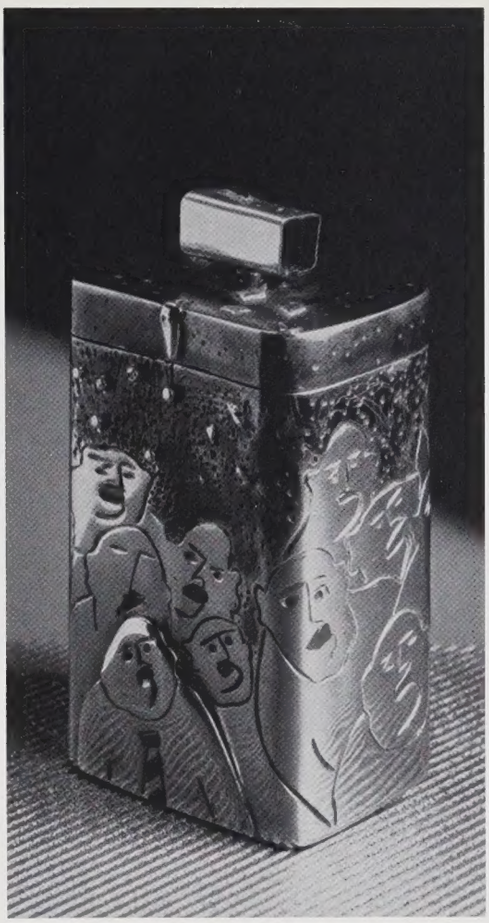




Far left: Antonia Von Braun, *A Little Green Box*, silver, epoxy, 1 x 1 1/2 x 1 x 3"; **left:** Antonia Von Braun, *Brotherhood Box*, silver, 14K, gold, epoxy, 1 x 1 1/2 x 2 1/2". Photos: Peter Meyer; **above:** Ulrike Johannsen, *Pin*, scattered silver, copper, 3"d.

European Figurative Jewelry: Antonia von Braun and Ulrika Johansen

VO Galeries, Washington, DC
March 17-April 13, 1988
by Komelia H. Okim

This exhibition was the second in a series of figurative jewelry shows at the VO Galeries. Originally organized by V&V Galeries in Vienna, Austria, it was the first time that these two young German jewelers have shown their work in the United States.

Ulrika Johansen's *Sad Monsters, Heart Eater, Devourer, Polecat's Teeth, Big Mouth, Eye, Snake* and *Mermaid* are pieces that suggest a demonic world view, though allegorical, humorous and androgynous in flavor. The media used are silver, copper, garnet and dabs of epoxy paint and acrylic. Most of her pieces are created with repousséd peapod shapes, showing a strong balance of positive and negative contrasts. They are flat and in low relief, with arrows and spears piercing anatomical details of the combined figures of females and males. The most interesting piece is *Devourer*, a necklace made with two large pins that can be draped on the shoulders without going around to the back of the neck. Like primitive Eyptian, African and Scythian shoulder pieces, they are wide and cover a large part of the torso. These figures are moveable and connected with simple chased and repousséd pillow forms. The hedonistic creatures are trying to eat and bite one another, with dangling garnets signifying blood. The theme is the game of eating, being eaten or devouring and biting into the heart.

Even if the heart of parts of the figures are eaten, these monsters appear both happy and sad, as sensuality and conscious lust lie at the root of this vicious ritual. All of Johansen's work depicts the problems of youth, issues dealing with survival, struggle and conformity.

Antonia von Braun is more punk in her feelings toward society. Her box, entitled *Brotherhood*, shows a boss and men behind him shouting and singing aloud, signifying businessmen who think they are smart and important. Most of her figures are androgynous or angels that look like men with broad chests, big bellies and breats. They are made with either liquid wood called "holzy" mounted on flat silver shapes or simple silver repousséd forms.

A carefully carved and detailed wood box with a decorated lid of crystal and capped with thin silver shapes is titled *New York*. The artists had never been to New York but has heard of it as the "Ultimate City." The sides of the box show the upper and lower parts of the city, and the top shows the Crucifixion. Fire scale and traces of solder reveal graphic images of gradations and color variations. The tiny plastic grapes and stones are placed between the metal shapes to let voluptuous ladies in silver counterbalance the weight and playfulness.

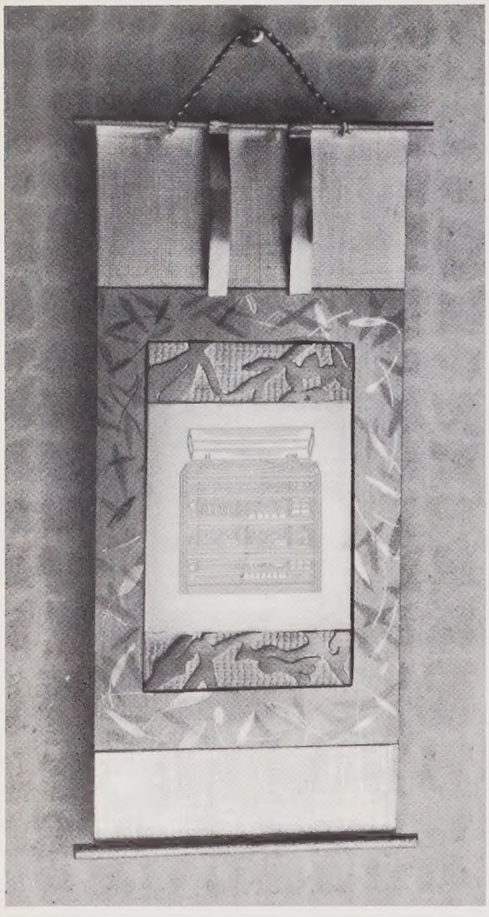
Individually and collectively, the works of these two artists provoke strong reactions in the viewer. Last year's American and this year's European figurative exhibition both revealed an interest in the problems of contemporary life and drew the viewer to the issues, which also act as a catharsis for the artists. In American figurative works, color played a dominant role. They were also decorative and technically involved, the craftsmanship taken more seriously, whereas these two German jewelers represent a subculture in Europe that relies on simplisitic colors and minimal techniques to get across a message. The emerging "new-wave" mentality is challenging while also being playful and whimsical.

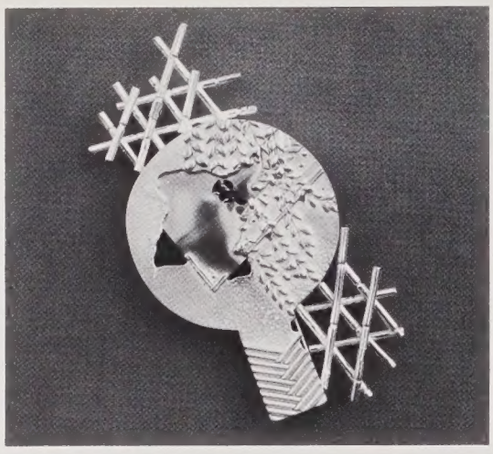
All Points

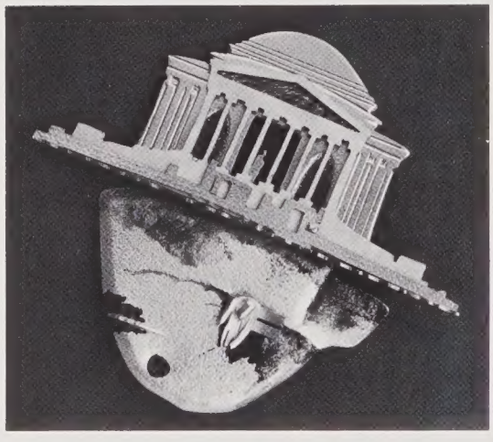
Lynda Watson-Abbott, Jamie Abbott
April 18-May 13, 1988
Cabrillo College Gallery, Cabrillo College, Aptos, CA
by Stephen Bondi

"All Points," the title of this joint exhibition, makes reference to the extensive travel shared by these two artists during their joint sabbatical leave. This travel, which consisted of a circuitous driving trip across the United States followed by a month-long trip to Japan, is the concept that unites and makes successful this exhibition of works that otherwise might well be too disparate to show together.

Working from the premise that the creative process is at least in part comprised of the triad of addition, reduction and/or manipulation (used singly or in combination), we see here the application of the additive process in the conceptual sense as well as physical. Both artists have taken the addition of these travels to their lives and used them as the departure point for the body of work presented. The sculptures of Jamie Abbott range in size from 18 inches to well over six feet and are constructed of mixed materials such as wire cloth covered with plaster or found materials including bamboo, wire and slate. It is the use of these materials as well as the images they service that conveys the sense of a cultural experience. Due to the scale of these works relative to the space of the gallery, Abbott presented only those works relating to his Japan trip,







Far left: Lynda Watson-Abbott, *Japan-Tradition/ Technology #3* wall piece (detail), fine silver, 18k gold, wood, rice paper, 6 1/2 x 8 5/8 x 5/8"; **left:** *Japan Motifs #3* brooch, sterling silver, 18k gold, 2 1/2 x 3 3/4 x 3/8", **below:** *East-West, DC/NM* brooch, 18-22k gold, formica, permanent marker, 2 1/2 x 1 3/4 x 5/8". Photos: Lynda Watson-Abbott; **opposite:** Glenda Arentzen, *Rings* (left) platinum, 18k yellow gold, 1980 (right) 14k yellow gold with oval crystal, 1965; **far right:** *Box Bracelet*, 24k yellow and 14k white gold, sterling silver, 14k yellow gold fusings, 1965. Photos: George Erml

utilizing images that make reference to radishes (dicon), Toro Gates and the simple but ingenious techniques of construction that are so unmistakably Japanese.

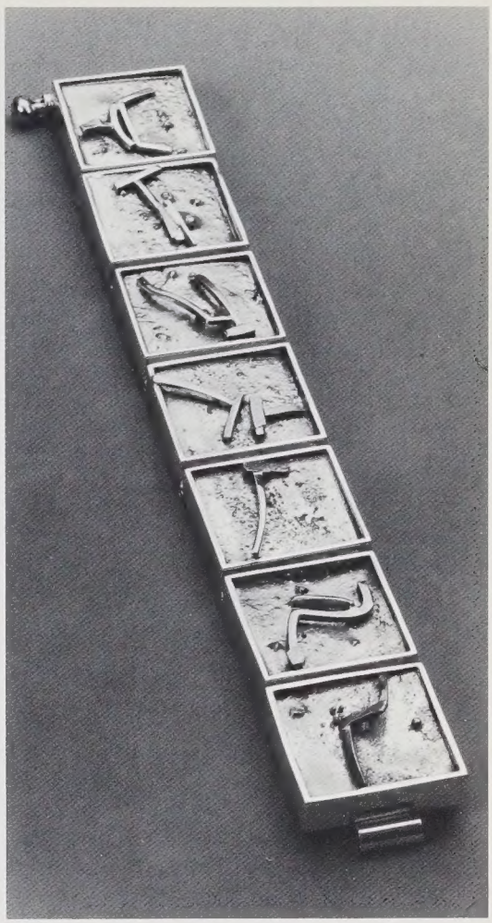
Lynda Watson-Abbott, on the other hand, is able to give us a much broader view of how she has utilized the travel experiences as creative stimuli or a "jumping-off" point. Because her jewelry is small and precious, there was great potential for its being lost among the more monumentally scaled works of Jamie Abbott. To avoid this, the works were displayed in three simple, free-standing cases that were almost silhouettes of vertical Post Modern buildings. This helped enormously in setting up an autonomy for these works as well as allowing one to see the themes that ran through them.

Peering through the tops/roofs of these cases gave six different views of Watson-Abbott's travels. For the U.S. portions there were three series: *Times and Places, North-South* and *East-West* and from Japan there were: *Japan Motifs, Japan-Tradition/ Technology* and *Fragments With Influences.* Throughout these pieces was evidence of Watson-Abbott's continued interest in the quality of color as offered by permanent markers in conjunction with more traditional jewelry "color" materials such as metals and stones. We also see her continuing investigation in the use of these elements not in a purely formalistic application but in a dialectic expression of experiential stimuli.

From the "East-West" series, two particularly intriguing and contrasting pieces are *East-West, DC/NM* and *East-West, CO/TN.* In *...DC/NM,* the literal image of the Jefferson Memorial of Washington, D.C. is combined with formica, treated as a New Mexico Indian baking oven. The complex architectonic nature of the Jefferson Memorial image has been sensitively offset not only by the naturalistic complexity of the formica but also by the addition of small metal components onto and into the material. While the Jefferson Memorial presents the viewer with "closed" and finite information, the oven with Watson-Abbott's additions gives us an "open" context whereby we are asked to bring to it our own interpretations. In contrast is *East-West, CO/TN,* which is much less literal in its overall format. Here a more abstract and formal composition is constructed with a recognizable vocabulary. The freeform sawed edge, offset by straight, hard edges, reflects the undulating repousséd surface representing mountain ranges. Here, again, is a subtle play of contrasting colors and surfaces. On the one hand, there are soft, rolling mountains, delicately colored with light green permanent markers, giving the sense of the natural flora one would find blending into craggier high-altitude mountains. These "above timberline" peaks are also accentuated with color, in this case, from the use of pale greenish blue high-cabachon moonstones. One particularly interesting aspect of this piece is the manner in which Watson-Abbott juxtaposed contrasting two-and three-dimensional approaches. On the surface of the rolling green hills are strong two-dimensional red dash marks, which might well be indicating paths or trails. As these marks carry into the craggier mountains, they become subordinate to the three-dimensional "play" between the rich surface and form of these mountains and the smooth counterpoints of the moonstones.

In the pieces reflecting her trip to Japan, Watson-Abbott has set up a visual vocabulary that is, logically, more culturally than geographically oriented. Undoubtedly the geographical differences of Japan made a marked impression on her, but, not unusually, she was most impressed with the new culture. In *Japan Motifs #3,* there is an interesting complement to the much larger works of Jamie Abbott. Both have used what we have come to accept as a "traditional" Japanese vocabulary of materials/ techniques (i.e., bamboo, small delicate leaves, lashing and simple systemic patterns). However, in Watson-Abbott's case, there is a preciousness of concept and understanding brought in by the factor of scale as well as the preciousness of materials. This piece, though abstract and formal in organization, with it's use of the circle, rectangle, chevron pattern and negative triangles, still projects its inception as being Japanese in influence. *Japan-Tradition/Technology #3,* on the other hand, shows a much more intellectual and analytical reflection on the new cultural experience. Here is the traditional Japanese scroll with its lovely subtle brushwork in quietly contrasting blacks, gold and silver set upon a ricepaper background with a natural wood frame. All is quiet and harmonious until we delve into the information presented on the scroll. Upon doing so, we are immediately brought into the late 20th century, if not the dawning of the 21st, by a finely and meticulously etched image of a new "super" stereo. This image immediately brings to mind all of our current obsessions with Japanese culture and technology as well as where they will/may take us in the future. For me, this may be the most profound piece in the exhibition, as it forces one to confront and reflect on a multitude of current geo-political issues.

A final highlight to the works of Watson-Abbott were three refreshing watercolor



drawings. In this time when there seems to be a compulsiveness to justifying one's "art/metalwork" by the cliche insertion or combination of the object with a drawing or some other "accepted" art form, it was a pleasure to encounter drawings and objects created for their own sake and without pretense.

Glenda Arentzen: A Retrospective

Aaron Faber Gallery, New York City
May 4-June 11, 1988
by Antonia H. Schwed

A retrospective of 102 pieces, spanning 25 years, is bound to encourage a historical mapping in the evolution of an artist's skill and design. For instance, a wooden box shocked me until I learned that it was one of the very first things that Glenda Arentzen made as a student of Earl Pardon at Skidmore College. The box (first exhibited at "Young Americans" in 1962), inlaid with an enamel top, does indeed represent beginning student work. I guess it goes to show that enamels have come a long way. At any rate, it served to highlight the beautiful silver and gold box done in 1986, included in the same case. This small, round box has silver on the exterior surface that is skillfully folded and textured to look like heavy fabric. The inside is gold, set with twinkling cubic zirconias.

Arentzen's amusing *Fingertips* are small fabricated caps for the fingers. These little, humorous objects of gold and silver are listed as "part of a set called *All the Things a Witch Might Want.*" Notable as well was a lovely gold pin set with a blue, orange and white diamond. The pin itself was formed of angular, irregular little beams of textured and nontextured gold, joined together to create a small, light sculptural construction.

Two large wall cases contained jewelry done in 1987 and 1988—work that went from delicate to almost massive—all made with great artistry. Although the past work was interesting, the newest work stole the show with its vigor, development and freedom of design. I especially admired a vermeil necklace of airy fabricated spheres. I can just imagine this piece almost frothing around the wearer's neck. Among the heavier pieces was a handsome gold-and-silver bracelet set with flat, squarish boulder opals of different sizes. The overall design of the bracelet was angular, avoiding curves and giving a dramatic, almost chaotic look; but, this was an artful, intentional chaos that one might find in geological upheaval. Another outstanding piece was a silver necklace, deceptively simple, consisting of large, flat, odd-shaped links, the surfaces of which had been hand textured. I also enjoyed an unusual silver chain, textured by sandblasting, and looking like rope translated into metal.

In addition to all the above, Arentzen displayed four prize-winning pieces, a selection of designs made for manufacture and part of a designer collection for Aiwa, Tokyo. She also introduced her new series of *Door* designs—mostly pins, except for a couple of pendants—which are not as abstract as are her other pieces in this rich panorama of her distinguished work.

Margaret Barnaby: Jewelry

Susan Cummins Gallery, Mill Valley, CA
April 4-30, 1988
by Roberta Floden

Each piece of Margaret Barnaby's jewelry is nothing less than an aquatic extravaganza. With nature's mystery as her inspiration, Barnaby's organic forms, unexpected materials and gemstones float effortlessly like marine life on the sea floor. And just like walking along the tidelines, every time your vision travels around her pieces you find something provocative.

Barnaby's cuffs, unlike the more conventional necklaces and earrings, show off her technical resources and give her sufficient visual space to explore her ideas and experiment with myriad materials. Each cuff is a bold collage of textures, shapes and colors. On one, for example, Barnaby has juxtaposed fragmented red coral (held in place by kelplike gold strands), uncut matteblue chrysocolla (cradled in a gold shell) and peachpink biwa pearls on a silver base, repousséd and chased with sea symbols. On others, there might be a combination of tourmaline, white quartz, slices of agate, garnet, opal, amethyst, prenite, charolite, rhodolite, chrysoprase and even an occasional banal diamond.

Like miniature sea chests full of hidden treasure, her cuffs are an endless source of discovery. For example, unexpected tiny, incised, organic shapes crawl beneath transparent cut gemstones (an intriguing device and one of Barnaby's favorites) on shiny gold surfaces or inside shells. Teethlike protrusions protect delicate pearls.

Bivalves house uncut semiprecious stones. Inside a silver clam shell may sit a

Left: Margaret Barnaby, *Necklace*, 18k gold, diamonds, agate by Dieter Lorenz, pendant 3" 1; **above:** *Cuff*, 18k gold, green beryl by Bern Munsteiner; **opposite, clockwise from top left:** Roger Snyder, *Idealism*; John Wittersheim, *Cross Feed*; Billie Jean Theide, *Showing Their Colors* bracelet, aluminum, 3 1/2 x 3 1/2 x 3 1/4"; *Slanted* cup, aluminum, silicone, 4 x 7 1/2 x 4 1/2"

sea creature, a filament of gold kelp, a gemstone or barnacles. One carefully tooled gold cuff highlights a green beryl by Bernd Munsteiner; another, *Night on the Lake*, a gold necklace of marine-life forms, accentuates a translucent agate by Dieter Lorenz.

Another bravura device of Barnaby's is to use the reflective qualities of highly polished surfaces to mirror the hidden sides of gemstones and coral and give the illusion of unfolding patterns in space. This rich play of textures invites closer examination, to look for even more secret places and treasures.

The careful detailing and control that Barnaby exhibits over each aspect of her complicated pieces indicates that a master of arrangement, shape, rhythm and critical balance is at work. Certainly, the world of the sea floor has seldom been rendered so ostentatiously—or been interpreted with such virtuosity.

Billie Jean Theide: It's Not Always Black and White

Kirkland Fine Arts Center Studio Gallery,
Millikin University,
Decatur, IL
February 29-March 11, 1988
by Timothy Garvey

That Billie Jean Theide's works are carefully fabricated metal constructions before they are bracelets, mirrors or brooches seems clear from the statement offered to accompany this show. She speaks of these recent objects as responses to journeys and explorations, records of personal thoughts and relationships and celebrations of "negative situations viewed positively." Although concluding that the pieces should "ideally" combine esthetic and conceptual impulses with their ostensible function, the more autobiographical character of the work appears dominant and its functional identity far less crucial.

The personal associations that Theide describes comes through forcefully in the work—especially among those pieces suggesting relationships, the formal combinations in *Long Distance* and *Long Distance III*. Each of these pieces (a hand mirror and bracelet, respectively) consist of a smaller satellite element attached to, yet distanced from, larger central components. The dialogue between the two segments is in each case reinforced by a familial resemblance between large and small parts. In *Long Distance*, the circular glass of the mirror is echoed by the gold ring of the satellite, while in *Long Distance III*, the smaller component is a green sphere visually akin, both in shape and color, to the ring of the bracelet from which it projects.

At the same time, however, the kinship of parts in these works involves certain contradictions that enhance the dialogue. Despite their resemblance, the smaller elements constitute radical departures from their larger bases. The mirror *Long Distance*, for example, is encased within a triangular blue base, the reflective glass centered in the larger form above a serrated lower edge and framed by silver rivets deployed along a vertical axis. To this nicely symmetrical base, the satellite is appended in a manner destroying all balance. A black and violet spine is fixed obliquely to one edge, weighting the right side of the work; and projecting from the upper end of this addition is the arc of black wire that curls away to the golden ring. Likewise, in Long Distance, a comparable symmetry found in the body bracelet is utterly broken by the projecting arc supporting its smaller sphere; and although both bracelet and ball are green, in this case, the former is a vivid metallic hue while the latter is mottled and comparatively dull. The result is a dialogue more argumentative than conversational. By presenting a static base and then attaching components contradicting the symmetry of their foundation, Theide creates work that succeed both in visual terms and as evocations of personal relationships.

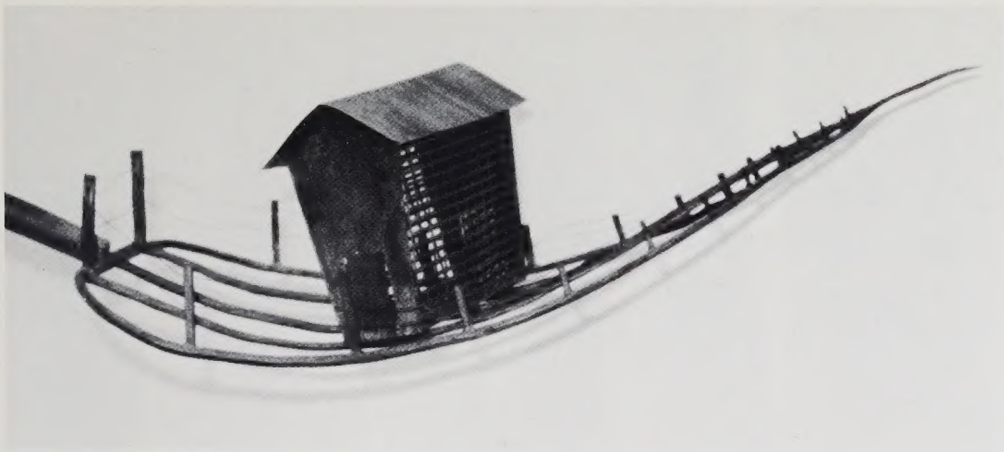
Theide's objects do have the capacity to function as jewelry or mirror or container. However, the works tread the line separating the functional from the visually compelling cautiously. The pieces are not simply small sculpture, for their uses are clear; yet they are not genuinely useful, for utility is clearly less important then other visual and personal concerns that contribute to their design.

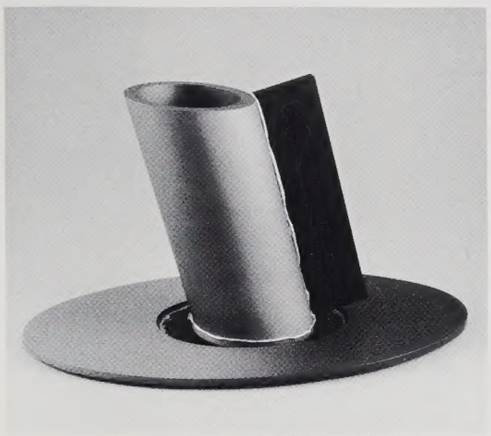
Theide's works, as she suggests, are indeed neither black nor white. Rather, they offer—and draw their strength from—contradictions. Potential symmetry is denied by the introduction of disruptive elements creating meaningful formal imbalance. The works are clearly sculptural, but equally referential to more functional traditions. In their carefully balanced opposition of features and concerns, her works demand thoughtful reconciliation rather than simple recognition.

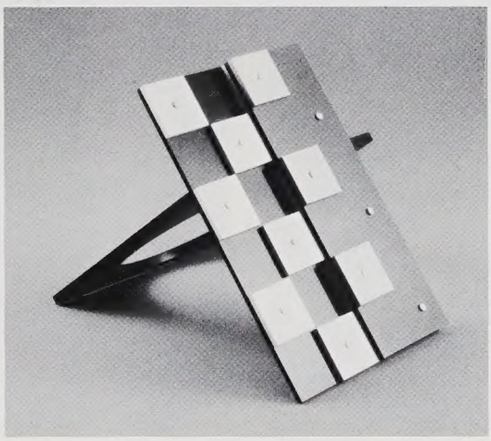
Two Views in Metal: Roger Snyder, John Wittersheim

Stubnitz Gallery, Adrian College, Adrian, MI
Spring, 1988
by Lisa Norton

"Two Views in Metal" offers a look at the work of two metalsmiths who are engaged in







the making of sculpture that re-presents artifacts associated with vanishing Americana. Much of their fascination derives from the simplicity and grace that our culture retrospectively assigns to antiquated objected indigenous to the rural and early industrial American experience. Reverence for the craftsman, the farmer, the work ethic and its inherent byproduct are themes that the works of Snyder and Wittersheim share. These artists differ in their sensibility and approach to a process aimed at the "rescue" of these vanishing ideals and artifacts. The act of reclamation speaks of a confidence in that value system. Their repositioning to an art context speaks of their obsolescence.

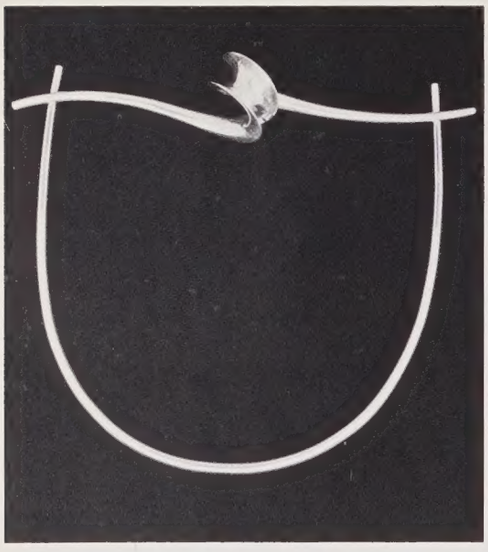
Snyder's work enshrines an era prior to the corporate farm. His artworks, surrogates for the predictable cash crop, are romantic dramatizations of the ongoing elimination of the small, family-run farm by conglomerate farmers. Although this emotionally charged regional issue affects the politics and economics of the entire nation, it is not fully understood by the average urban American. Snyder's visual approach regretfully mimics the nostalgic aspects of farm life, creating narratives that expose the threat imposed by the corporate system. A set of two works entitled *Idealism* and *Realism,* work in tandem, describing an idealized version of the past and its subsequent destruction. Both works use a pitchfork as their basis. The pitchforks are hung from the ceiling in a horizontal position, denying the familiar vertical orientation and the inherent tool/earth connection. *Idealism* presents a clean, unused pitchfork cradling a scaled-down corn crib in its tines. The tines reference an outstretched hand and, in their horizontal orientation, suggest rows of crops. *Realism* describes its opposition, with "rough hewn" miniature 4x4s diminishing in size along its handle, creating a false perspective evocative of time, distance, loss. This pitchfork has been "weathered," and the barn that rests in its tines is violently pierced by the tines of another pitchfork, minus its handle.

These stylized, archetypal renderings evoke a winsome and sentimental image—a foil to the logic of capitalism. However, they don't enlighten the uninitiated viewer to the complexities of the farmer's situation, nor do they offer a sense of hope, beyond nostalgic empathy. The romanticized image of the farm as the last bastion of unspoiled wholesomeness masks the reality of its systematic and integral function within commodity production. I wished for more associative meaning, beyond stylization. Many of Snyder's works employ an aerial view perspective lending a poignant sense of omnipotence. This sense of powerlessness and urgency could be heightened.

The works of John Wittersheim share this reverence for the past, specifically early industrial artifacts. This body of work incorporates the found object while altering its original function and context. Wittersheim "rescues" simple discarded industrial components and recombines them, often with precise, machine-tooled parts of his own making, in order to create a hybrid that is formally elegant and ambiguous in origin. The obsolete quality of the cast iron remnants contrasts oddly with the precision of lathe-turned granite and aluminum additions.

Central to Wittersheim's investigations into tool use and development has been the infinite variety of forms, both industrial and handmade, that make use of simple principles of physics. Devices such as the plumb bob illustrate his interest in the tool as an extension of the craftsman, and the logical beauty of a form-follows-function esthetic. The logical order of the physical world provides the starting point for these small sculptural works, many of which embody the mystery of objects in an antique tool museum. In recombination, these fragments take on an ambiguity, their titles hinting at their former function and dubious origin. *Shock Wrench*, for example, a rusted cast iron part has been painted with bright blue enamel paint and joined with lathe-turned aluminum and steel elements, creating a new whole that calls to mind a suspended crestlike form suggesting the formality of much Celtic metalwork. This grouping of work, reminiscent of arms and weaponry, creates juxtapositions of nostalgic and incomplete objects—simple cranks, gears and tools of outmoded industry, which function as in a holding area for the obsolete. These objects capitalize on the serene elegance that is created when their function is abstracted.

Both groups of work rely on the assumed dignity of the work ethic and its implied value system. A sign in the gallery reads, "Please do not touch the metalworks." Within the context of this exhibition, this ironic removal to the art gallery is exaggerated. The simple tools of farming and industry are arrested from motion, fixed within the art object.



Above: David Jaworski, *Helicoid Neckpiece*, sterling silver; **right:** Phillip Baldwin, *Oriental Kitchen Set*, pattern-welded steel, brass/copper mokume, sterling silver, wood—cleaver 11 x 2 1/2 x 3/4", 1985; **far right:** *Fortune Dagger*, pattern-welded steel, copper, shakudo, sterling silver, leather, wood, mild steel, 1983. Photos: F. Jack Hurley; **opposite, left:** Sandra Enterline, *Dimentions Tool Brooches*, sterling silver, hollow formed and fabricated—largest 7 x 7/8 x 1/4"; **right:** *Dimensions Spear and Shield Brooches*, sterling silver, 18k gold, hollow formed and fabricated—largest 10 1/2 x 1 x 1/4"

David Jaworski: Recent Works

Artifice Gallery, St. Louis, MO
March 6-31, 1988
By Teresa Callahan

Perhaps the ultimate attestation to an artist's ability is that the realization of his efforts is actualized with seemingly apparent ease. In many cases, the consummate technician's expertise is demonstrated through his selective restraint regarding superfluous excess.

In *Recent Works* David Jaworski displays a small selection of sterling silver earrings, neckpieces, pins and a bracelet. Primarily a sculptor, he shows two pieces of bronze sculpture adorned with blown glass. In most of this work, the artist explores several variations of the helicoid. Jaworski's pursuit of novel composition conjoins his employment of hollow forming techniques. His superbly finished structures are simple, uncluttered and lyrical, with just enough movement to resist tedium. Each piece is meticulously constructed, replete with a mirror finish to emphasize its dynamic articulation. While the jewelry is of a high caliber, it is surely marketable. Pearls adorn some pieces, but the most successful statements are stark and absolutely devoid of surface ornamentation.

The signs of a superb technician are present throughout all the jewelry, but the artist in Jaworski emerges in the neckpieces. These pieces literally vibrate with a serene, naive resonance. In an effort to hide latches and various engineering elements within the junction of collars and pendants, Jaworski unwittingly breathes life into these neckpieces. The intersections resemble twiglike boundaries appointed with an exquisitely sensitive touch. This flourish lends primal quality to the work. Additionally, these pieces possess the spiritual punch of a pure, sterling white surface. The strong, unwavering line quality reveals the inner confidence, and sensitive nature of the maker.

Lance is a larger piece of sculpture that portrays a bronze helicoid spiraling upward, being pierced by a spear shaped piece of blown striated glass. The glass treatment is visually exciting, resembling the cross section of a brilliant agate.

Spectral Fragments, being more controlled, is less successful. It too features bronze and glass perched atop a black marble base. This piece incorporates an electric light source that illuminates the glass from within. The hollow bronze resembles petals and yields a static visual effect. Jaworski is more effective when he explores movement and is most effective when he allows the viewer a glimpse of his essential nature.

Phillip Baldwin: Bladesmith

National Ornamental Metal Museum,
Memphis, TN
March 11-May 8, 1988
By Linda Lindeen Raiteri

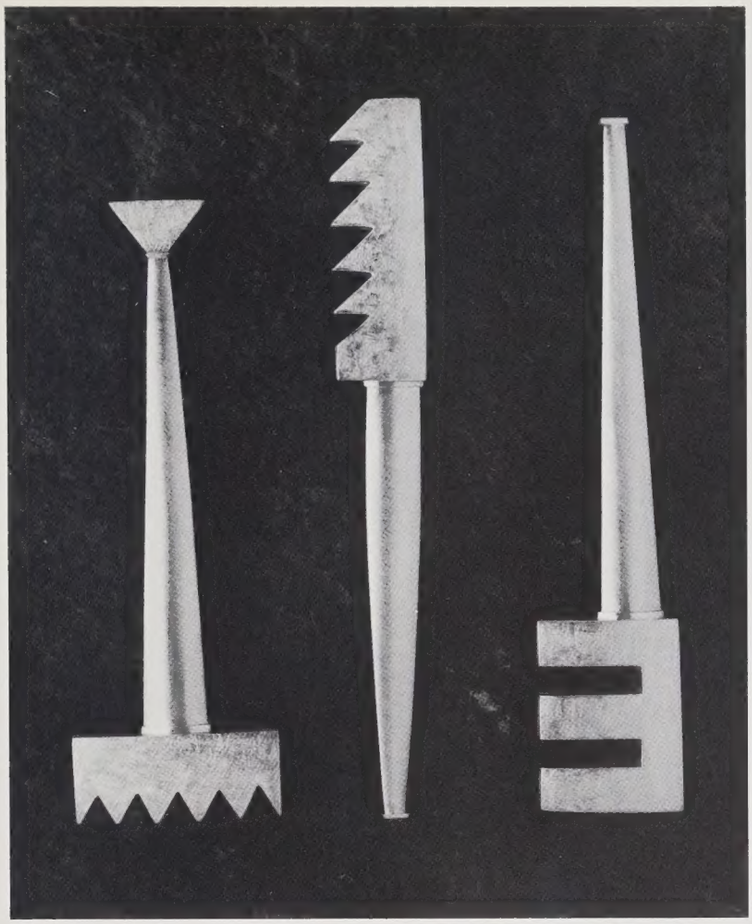
Most of the blades in Phillip Baldwin's first one-person show at the National Ornamental Metal Museum are of pattern welded steel. Since the nature of museum installations often sabotages a tactile appreciation of the work (feeling the blade, its unity, sharpness, smoothness, the way the weight is or is not distributed from blade tip to handle end), the only suitable critical approach is to recognize visual comparisons. For example, the juxtaposition of the knife *Tooth* (1979), with the smaller *Ladytooth* (1980), both with purple heartwood sheaths and handles, trimmed with silver and brass, and simple, folded steel blades suggests a sleek, contemporary tandem.

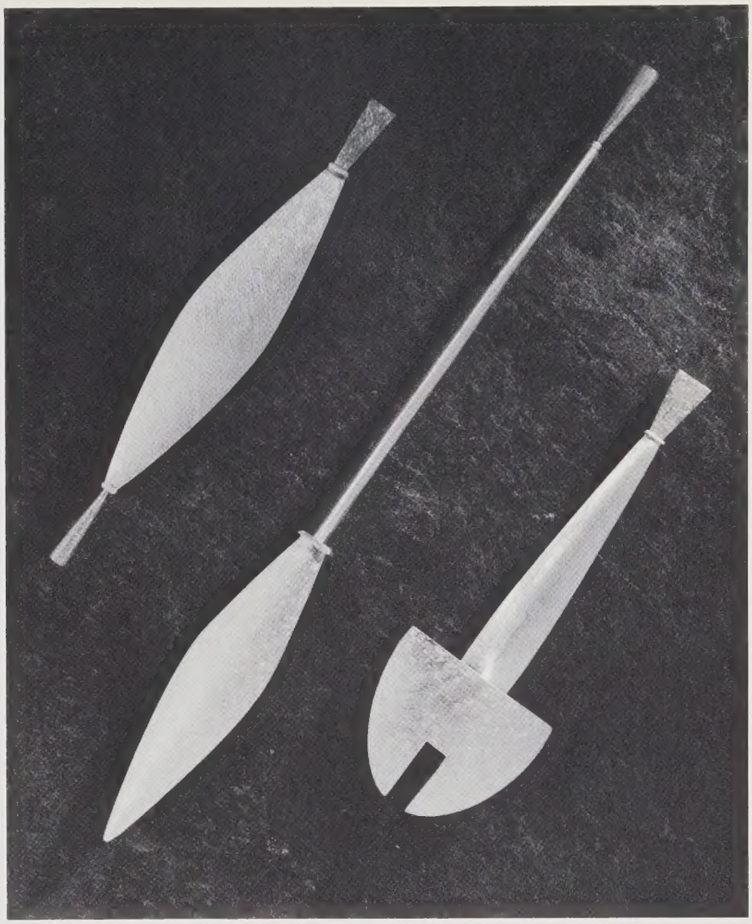
In contrast, *Fortune Dagger* (1983), with hearts placed on the inverted heart-shaped pommel and on the copper ricasso, evokes the twistings of fate in the twistings of the laminates to create a double-swirl pattern. While, on the pattern-welded, steel blade of the tomahawk *Blackheart* (1986), the pattern swirls like water, then stills at the cutting edge.

In *Oriental Kitchen Set* (1985), Baldwin has used the mokume process on brass and copper to create a wood grained pattern in the blades of the cleaver and two knives. Each blade pattern is different and the three are held to a relationship by similarity of the handles.

In the *Knife and Fork Eating Set* exhibited for the first time, abalone glints from the wenge wood handles made by Jim Kelso as if to remind the user of the substance within. The iridescence of the abalone contrasts in color with the marbleized design of the pattern-welded knife blade and fork.

The newest piece is *Ultimate Slicer II* (1988), curved for leverage from hilt to tip with a series ovals, pattern welded into the steel blade and finished-out in sterling silver on a handle of fossilized walrus ivory. Appreciation of Baldwin's work is enhanced by an understanding of the precision and forethought that go into the creation of blades by the techniques of pattern welding.





Sandra Enterline

Susan Cummins Gallery, Mill Valley, CA
January, 1988
by Roberta Floden

Evidence of stronger sculptural forms is apparent in the current jewelry of Sandra Enterline. Minimalist in design, her hollow-form brooches and earrings are assuming a nonreferential monumentality. Upon closer inspection, however, Enterline's jewelry is not entirely devoid of literal or symbolic content. Obviously, it is her purpose to restrict her designs to essentials, but beneath her variations on soft-edged geometry are bold allusions to ritual objects, boats, farm tools and urns.

The linear proportions of Enterline's brooch series are dramatically exaggerated (some of them are over 10 inches long) and have a certain expressive physicality. Yet, they are lightweight and surprisingly graceful, with clean uncluttered lines that allow them to adorn the body elegantly. When worn, the brooches engage the space around them and the elements work together to emphasize form and reflection.

Her textured surfaces forcefully capture the viewer's attention. Made by filing silver, brass or bronze, and then dipping the pieces in oxides, these surfaces reveal all their scratched irregularities. The result is a rich, colorful iridescent patina, often bluish purple with gold highlights. The patina is especially compelling when accompanied by Enterline's gold details and irregular spines; the gold is not changed by the oxides and its yellow color emphasizes the patina's shimmering quality.

Her earrings, often large wheels, funnels or urns, are fashionably unmatched; emanating from each earring of a pair are different numbers of delicate gold spines of unequal length. Though not oversized for today's earrings, they make bold statements and, like the brooches, capture the chance effects of light as the wearer moves.

The juxtaposition of the irresistible patina, the gently swollen curves of the simple forms, the accentuating gold spines and especially the restrained yet theatrical size of the pieces commend the fresh quality of Enterline's work. Her simplicity does not preclude expressiveness. Enterline's jewelry has emotional power, of an archaic, theatrical presence, with antecedents in ceremonial jewelry and the shiny, crisp profiles of modern tools and equipment.

Sam Farmer: Texture as Symbol

Wichita Art Association, Wichita, KS
March 20—April 17, 1988
by Glenice Lesley Matthews

"Texture As Symbol" is the culmination of a year's preparation and exploration. Centered around three themes (which Farmer pushes to the limits), scuba diving, a fascination for Africa and focus on the space program, the literal translations are held together by using texture and marriage of metals in a thought-provoking statement.

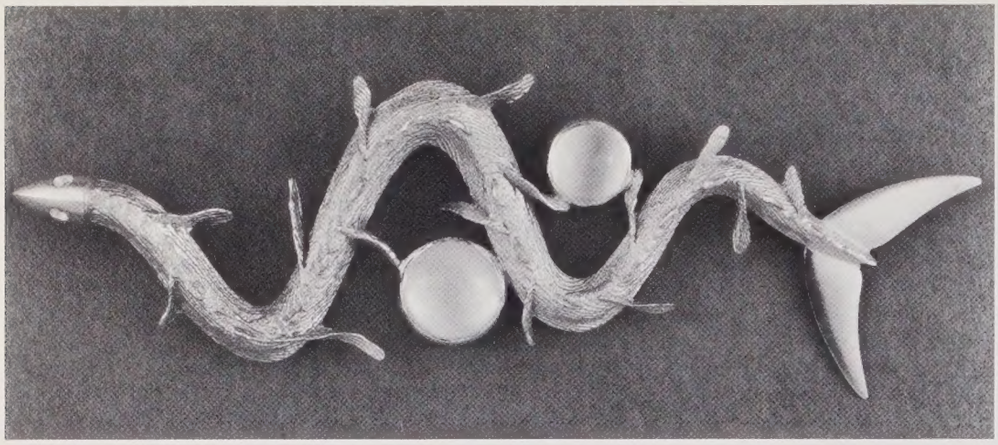
In the African series, it is the grasslands, the shapes of native artifacts and the atmospheric qualities of the environment that provoke Farmer's imagery. *Sunrise Over the Serengeti* is the thesis of an inspired group of pieces—perhaps the most stunning of the exhibit. A double shield shaped brooch of 14k white and yellow gold, sterling and pavé set diamonds demonstrates Farmer's precisionlike mastery of the marriage-of-metals technique. Several sets of earrings complement and continue this theme. In particular, a pair also called *Sunrise Over the Serengeti* made of 14k gold, sterling, star rose quartz and black onyx takes on the mysterious persona of a Masai standing behind a shield, spear in hand.

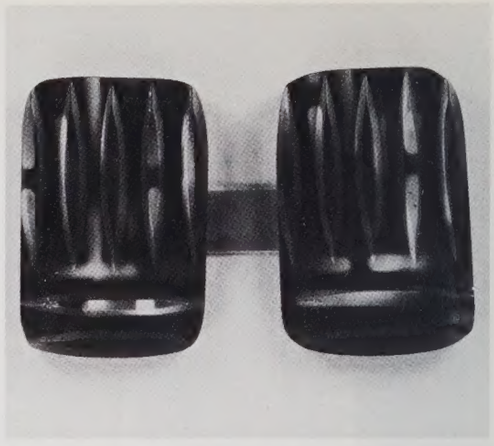
More abstract is the dynamic *Pin/Object-Shield* of sterling and nickel set with moonstone. It conjures up the image of a group of powerful warriors padding silently through the grassland.

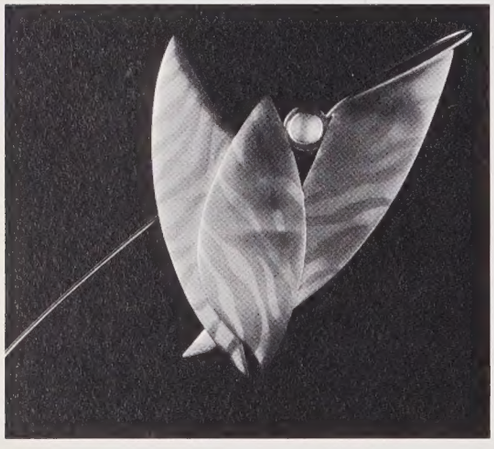
It is these patterns of waving grasses, executed through marriage of metals, that transfer on to the series of Ichthy forms. Now the imagery can be perceived as seaweed and/or the patterns formed on the ocean floor by wave movement, or, again, as surf on the water's edge. Here Farmer has added cuttlebone casting to the elements that become the finished item. The neckpiece *Estuary*, combines 14k yellow gold, sterling, labradorite, star rose quartz and nickel white. *Drifting Along the Tepid Water, Deep within the Jungle* uses sterling silver, nickel, copper, lapis lazuli and citrine and *Zebra Ray* is made of 14k gold, sterling, nickel and onyx. Although each unit is a separate component in these pieces, because of Farmer's lyric interpretation, they become a cohesive assemblage.

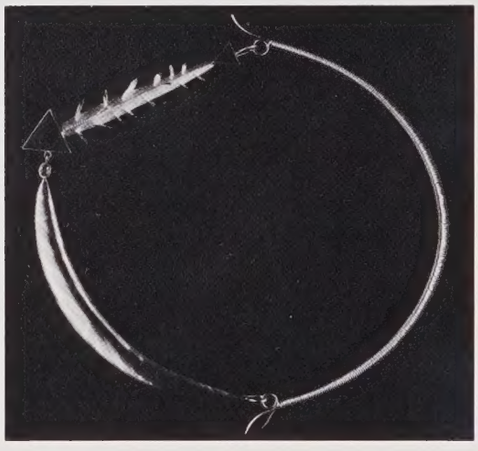
My Holy Flying Mackerel Sometimes Shoots the Moon, of 14k gold, sterling, moonstone, transfers one's attention from the ocean floor to the heavens and *Moonrise I, Moonrise II* and *Drift* are fine examples of the use of texture to define imaginary space.

Farmer, in his exhibit statement, says "he likes to dream." On viewing the exhibit, technique, methodology and superb craftsmanship are generally forgotten for the









Clockwise from top left: Sam Farmer, *Serpentine Moon Dream, Ichthy Form Series*, sterling silver, moonstone, 4 1/2 x 1 1/2"; Anne Krohn Graham, *Metro Specs* pendant and wall piece, anodized aluminum, sterling silver, rubber; Sam Farmer, *Drifting Along the Tepid Water, Deep within the Jungle* neckpiece, sterling silver, nickel, copper, lapis lazuli, citrine, 10 x 10"; Sam Farmer, *Shield* pin/object, sterling silver, nickel, moonstone, 3 x 3"; **opposite, left to right:** Barbara Bronstein, *Ceremonial Cup*, silver, 1987. Photo: Stanley Seligsen; Barbara Stanger, *Mezuzah*, silver, copper, jade, 1985. Photo: Barbara Stanger; Zelig Segal, *Yahrzeit Candleholder*, gold plate on brass, 1984. Photo: Bob Hanson

sheer beauty and mystique of the fine presentation. So, we too are allowed to dream and respond to the symbolic timelessness.

Anne Krohn Graham: Light and Movement

Perkins Student Center Gallery
University of Delaware, Newark, DE
September 10-25, 1987
by Jan Peters

The University of Delaware Fine Arts and Exhibitions Committee invited Anne Krohn Graham to have this solo exhibit as part of the inaugural ceremonies for the new university president. The design and execution of the entire show of 43 pieces from invitational artwork to installation were hers.

There were three small freestanding cases in the center of the gallery, but most of the work was worn by gray mannequins, contrasting body form with the geometric format of the jewelry. Large (16 x 20) black-and-white photographs mounted on the walls totally integrated the gallery space. They showed the same jewelry from an alternate view or orientation, thereby enhancing understanding of form and function and inviting the viewer to try on each piece. Thus, one could feel the ease with which a rather stiff-looking piece could be comfortably worn, well-balanced and almost weightless. The photos, as artful as her jewelry, and also for sale, were color-enhanced by Graham to give a strikingly accurate representation.

Many pieces had multiple functions. Linear emphasis characterized the body—sculpture group of neck-waist, wrist/ankle and calf/arm sets fabricated in aluminum rod. Each functions equally well around the designated body parts. Graham says the calf piece *Circus* could be worn jogging; leg muscles conform to the bent perpendicular shape. It is secured in place by slight tension and is, in fact, extraordinarily comfortable. Some pieces were designed to interrelate off the body and do succeed in standing alone as table sculpture. On a monumental scale one can visualize these maquettes as outdoor sculpture. A group of framed pendants included *Safari Metro,* consisting of two textured squares set on the diagonal and connected by a bead blasted sterling silver bar, which receives through tubes triple strands of rubber to circle the neck. All were housed in a square frame for wall presentation. Some of Graham's newest work is a series of "earplates": large, textured shieldlike forms fitted with rotating french wires which can also be worn over a fabric edge. She creates interest though the inventive use of multiple colors in a muted cross-hatched pattern, reminiscent of the architectural patterns and urban structures that inspire her.

Earlier pieces relied primarily on form for their visual impact. Now her work is also about color and detail. Experiments with the aluminum dying process led Graham to develop techniques using stencils, airbrush and a variety of dyes. She creates geometric patterns in color on patterns of negative space or patterns photoetched into the metal, integrating color with surface and form. She can use colors ordinarily not associated with aluminum, such as white, because of her special technique of application. Graham plans her geometric forms from inception using paper model construction. The dying process, however, is a dynamic one in which she responds to the cannotative quality of each color before adding another. Thus, her work is vital, spontaneous and fresh. Even the initiate wonders how Graham has achieved her color effects. Some are very soft and subtle, contrasting with hard geometric edges, while others are jarring and trendy. Some new pectorals, however, are achromatic, the gray, black and/or white giving them simplicity and elegance.

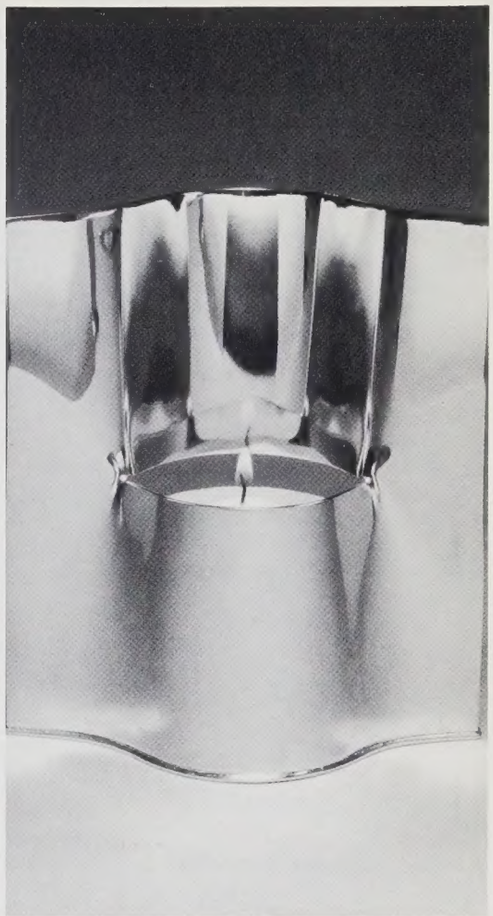
"My wearable pieces respond to a deep instinct best described by the Japanese word 'basara' . . . analogous to the sense of beauty that compels a person to surprise people with a showy, lively attire." Indeed Graham's pieces are exuberant and energetic, surprising and delightful, not unlike the artist herself.

Masters of Ceremony: Designers of New Judaica

B'nai B'rith Klutznick Museum, Washington, DC
October 6, 1987-January 31, 1988
by Renee Goldin

This was a momentous show for those involved with any aspect of contemporary Judaica. Numerous media were represented: wood, glass, fiber, clay, metal and even cut paper, but metals dominated the show.

The glory of "Masters of Ceremony," in addition to its clever title, is that it demonstrates that the Jewish ritual object is being more widely considered in terms of contemporary techniques and esthetics. Also encouraging was the participation of metalsmiths who became known for their jewelry and holloware and have now begun seriously to address the specialized area of Jewish ceremonial art. To see traditional ritual objects interpreted with the diverse



creativity of David Paul Bacharach, Fred Fenster, Pat Flynn, Stanley Lechtzin and Munya Avigail Upin was a special privilege. Because of the importance of this exhibition, it is not surprising to see the contributions of metalsmiths whose names have been exclusively associated with Judaica for years: Kurt Matzdorf, the late Ludwig Wolpert, Chava Wolpert, Moshe Zabari and Bernard Bernstein. In addition, other new and young talents are being attracted to the field, as evidenced by the contributions of Frann Addison and Barbara Bronstein. A number of Israeli metalsmiths with excellent training have made their presence and work known in America during recent years; many of whom are also represented in this show. I hope that one of the achievements of this exhibition, and of this review, will be to attract other talented artists to the field, as well as to attract more patronage.

The items in the show included categories of artifacts that an observant Jew might own for personal use at home. Some are used in the synagogue. Except for Torah pointers, no other items for dressing the Torah were included, either textile or metal, no eternal light or synagogue menorah. The absence of these major categories may indicate that the artists have not educated themselves sufficiently to attempt these possibilities, or have thought primarily in terms of objects that are most easily sold. This may explain the large number of *mezuzahs* shown.

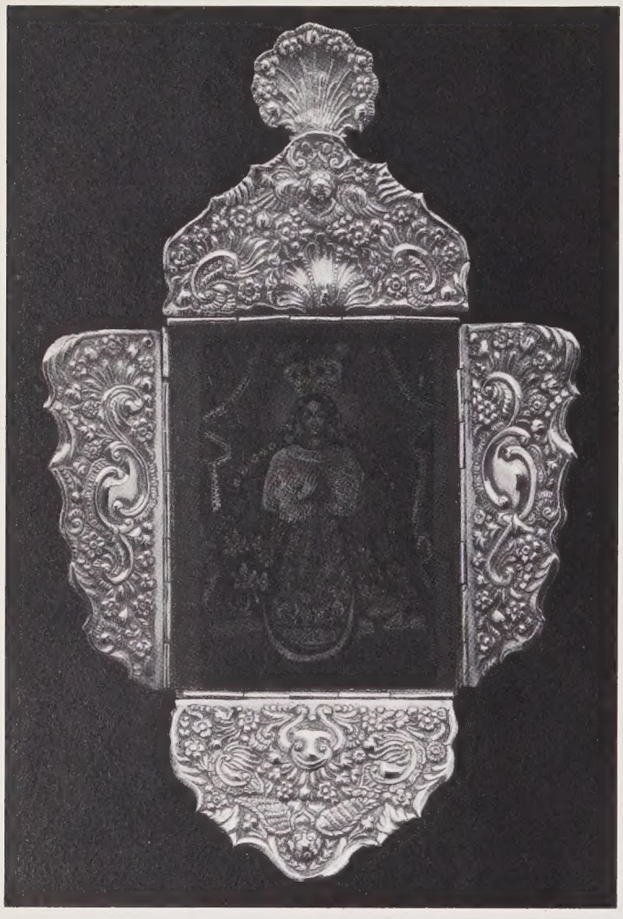
Many people who saw this exhibition felt that some of the items defied their presumptive use by being large or nonfunctional. If the works were being considered by an Orthodox Jew rather than a craft writer, in all likelihood the majority of the works would be rejected at the outset. There are various *halachic* (legal) requirements for these artifacts, some extremely obscure, that are represented by the religious—for instance, that a prayer shawl be a minimum width in order to be considered valid. According to some, the tablets of the law must be depicted as cubic rather than arched slabs of stone; some adhere to the dictum that a menorah can only be made of metal and must have all the candleholders on the same plane, with one "servant" raised above the others. Thus, all the ceramic menorahs, as well as those whose candleholders vary from this prescription, would be considered unacceptable. It is well known that the Reform and Conservative movements of Judaism allow for more creativity and more variation from strict legal forms. They also extend greater patronage to the arts.

Space allows only the discussion of a few objects in this rich show; and so I will deal with pieces by makers not covered by Bernard Bernstein in his recent article "The Jewish Ceremonial Object," *Metalsmith*, Summer 87. Upon entering the exhibition, I was urgently attracted by the work of Barbara Bronstein—two sets of candlesticks and a ceremonial wine cup, all in sterling silver. Although absent of any literal indicators of Judaism, these forms convey the essence of the ritual object. They are variations on the same theme:simple strong forms, enhanced by a sweeping diagonal line. In terms of the candleholders, the attitude of flight brings forth the poetic suggestion of outreach towards the "Sabbath bride." An additional virtue of the diagonal line is that it suggests the hand of the user embracing the vessel and protecting the kindling flame of the Sabbath candles.

Zelig Segal, an Israeli, has fashioned a *yahrtzeit* (memorial candle) container from a single sheet of metal; it is horizontally pierced, with a pocket pulled from the sheet (as if it had been clay or other plastic material) forming a place in which to set the little wax-filled glasses sold commercially as memorial candles. The concave back forms a reflector for the flame and contains applied metal Hebrew letters forming the word "Remember." The piece is made of silver plated brass, and the letters appear to be gold plated. The piece is so highly polished that it is, unfortunately, difficult to discern the inscription because of the glare. If, perhaps, the portion behind the letters had been sandblasted to reduce the shine and the letters oxidized rather than gilded, the statement could be more readily grasped. The design is nevertheless a paradigm of elegance.

In terms of elegance, Dorothy Gutfeld has produced a Chanukah menorah in silver-plated brass that exemplifies that term. It consists of five descending half-circular arches of equal height, of substantial metal sheet, in successive back-to-front orientation, capped with tubular candleholders. The *shamash*, or servant, is centered upon the rear plate, the four other plates bear pairs of candleholders, one to each side. This is the ultimate menorah form in terms of a minimalist Bauhaus expression. Though some might curse the very wax that dares to drip upon this surface, and others will think that the austerity of this design compromises its warmth, this Platonic ideal of a Chanukah candelabrum is to my thinking a spectacular piece.

A small *Havdalah* spice container by Bernard Bernstein consists of a rosewood foot suggestive of the base of a chesspiece, and a tuliplike top of folded and textured silver. Its cross-sectional profile is that of a six-pointed star. The base of the tulip curves in-



Far left: *Mate Cup with Mermaid Tripod*, Argentina, late 19th c., cast and chiseled silver, 6 1/2 x 3 5/8", **left:** *Travel Frame with Religious Painting*, Upper Peru, 18th c., repoussé and chiseled silver, 13 7/8 x 8 3/4 x 5/8". Photos: Anthony Richardson/ SYNTAX

ward like the flower itself, and its would-be calyx consists of negative space that also forms a six-pointed star. Within the flower-like head is a spice receptacle topped with a small crown made of pierced Hebrew lettering that is its cover. The meaning of *Havdalah* is "separation," implying the termination of the holy day (Sabbath) and the beginning of the secular week. The two materials used within this piece, rosewood and silver, also express this separation in a unified way, with a matching of scale, a matching of curves.

The single ritual artifact that most Jews are likely to own is a *mezuzah*, a small narrow container, usually made of metal, ceramic, wood, etc., that holds a scroll with a passage from Deuteronomy. This is, as the passage instructs, fastened onto one's doorpost. There are numerous *mezuzahs* in this exhibition, executed in various materials. Among the most interesting are two whimsical, bejeweled creations by Barbara Stanger in various colors of metal, depicting the buildings of Jerusalem.

The B'nai B'rith Klutznick Museum, which has been described as the finest small museum in Washington, has done justice to such a compliment. With this exhibition the curator, Gayle Weiss, has acknowledged and celebrated the rapidly expanding interest in contemporary Jewish ritual art as a vehicle for both creative involvement of artists and appreciation of collectors. The overall quality of the work is excellent and reflects the increasing participation of serious craftspeople in what was once a quite esoteric pursuit.

Masterworks of Colonial Silver from the Museo Isaac Fernandez Blanco, Buenos Aires, Argentina

Millicent Rogers Museum, Taos, NM
January 16-April 10, 1988
Center for the Fine Arts, Miami, FL
Summer 1988
by Elizabeth Skidmore Sasser

Silver objects, symbols of worldliness and wealth to the New Mexican settlers, were humble products of silversmiths working in the urban communities of Mexico and South America. With mines capable of producing silver in unimagined quantities, skilled metal craftsmen were among those to sail on the first ships from Spain. The Indians, who had practiced advanced methods of metallurge long before the intrusion of Europeans, were taught to use the unfamiliar tools and to adopt Renaissance motifs that would appeal to Spanish taste. In the exhibition, however, some of the most appealing work is the result of an infusion of New World genre and local customs. A domestically indeispensible item was the cup for drinking *yerba mate*; it was traditionally accompanied by a *bombilla*, or straw, orginally made from a hollow cane, which was gradually replaced by a tube of chased silver with a filter of gold or silver wires. Among the natives, mate was sipped from the bottom half of a gourd. The Spanish wrapped the gourd in silver bands until, in the 18th-century, the shell was completely concealed by a silver casing. A lite 19th-century mate cup, upheld by three mermaids, discarded the gourd altogether, allowing only the shape in cast and chiseled silver to linger. Perfumers were luxury items often designed in the form of animals or fowls. Native turkeys were allowed to hobnob with peacocks, and llamas took their place with deer. Among the utilitarian needs provided for by the fine silver work were horse gear, stirrups—small silver slippers for ladies, long shawl pins like the *topos* worn in the Andes, candlesticks, tableware and travel frames for religious paintings. The exhibition brought together such church requirements as monstrances, candelabras, tabernacles, ornamental plaques, wine jugs, chalices, censers, holy water vessels and even a life sized wooden angel with gigantic silver wings. The techniques most frequently employed were cast and chiseled silver, perforated and filigreed work, repoussé combined with chiseled metal, and the embellishment of silver with stones and gold.

In the preface to the exhibition catalogue, Adolfo Luis Ribera explained that today little remains of the wealth of silver once mined in South America; but the memory of such riches is preserved in the colloquial expressions, "it's worth a Peru" or "it's worth a Potosi." Modern metalsmiths who have the opportunity to examine the virtuosity of workmanship and the inventiveness of the silversmiths in the Spanish colonies will find the experience worth both "a Potosi" and "a Peru."

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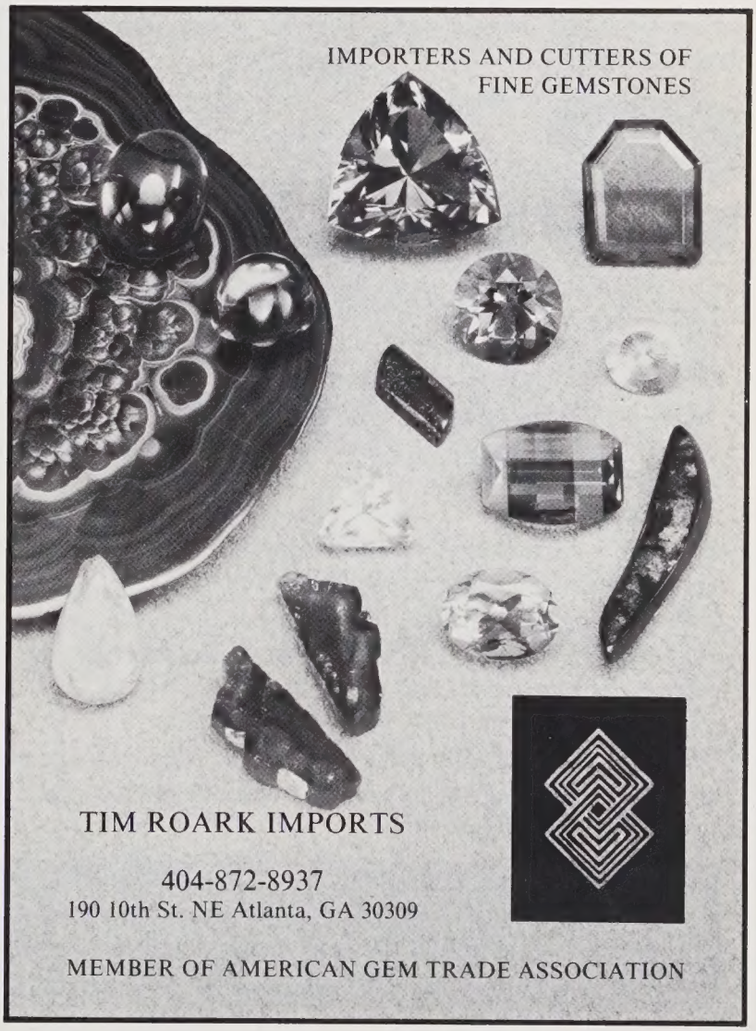

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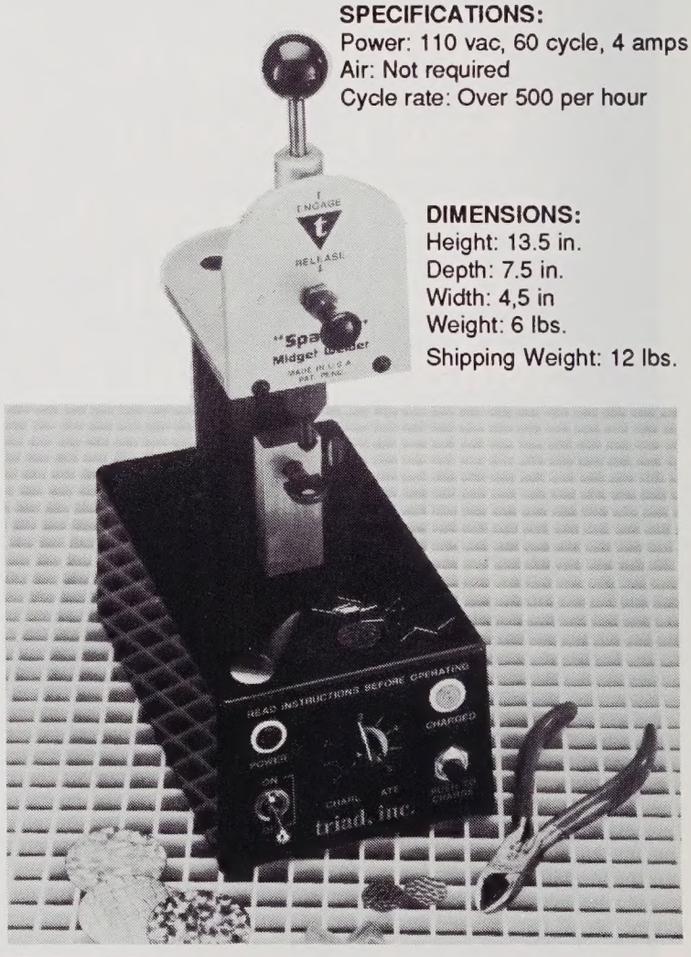

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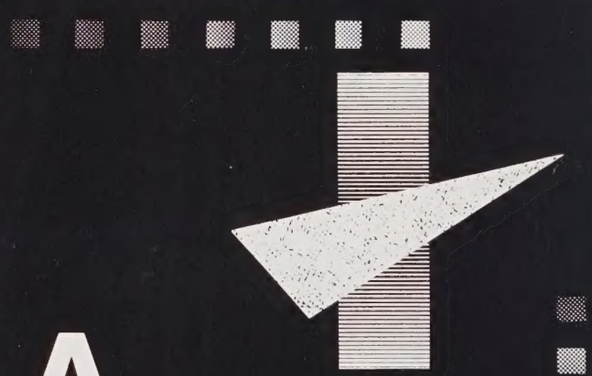

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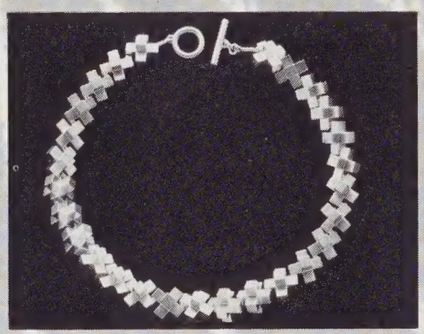

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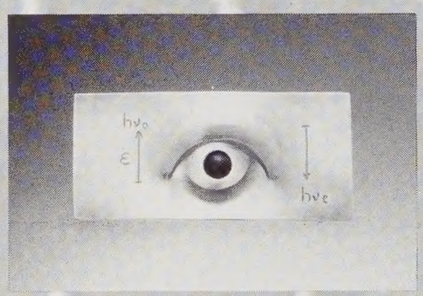

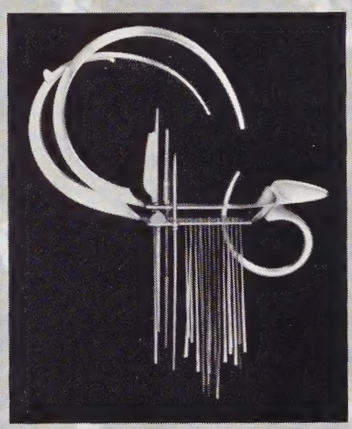

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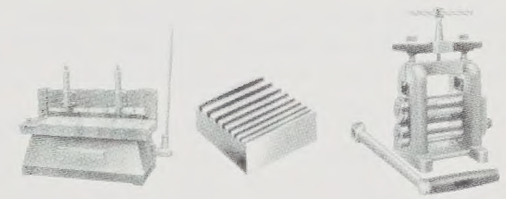

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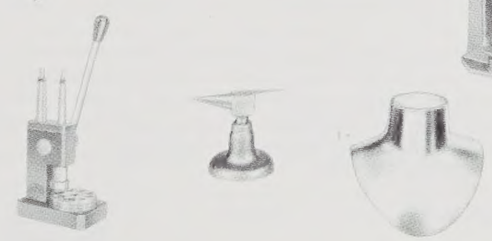

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Technical information, esthetic and educational issues, and other topics of interest to the practitioner and teacher of contemporary metalwork are disseminated by SNAG publications and conferences. Professionals and students, collectors, gallery owners and enthusiasts will all find SNAG interesting and useful. From pure sculpture to production jewelry, SNAG offers information on the entire range of the exciting field of metalsmithing.

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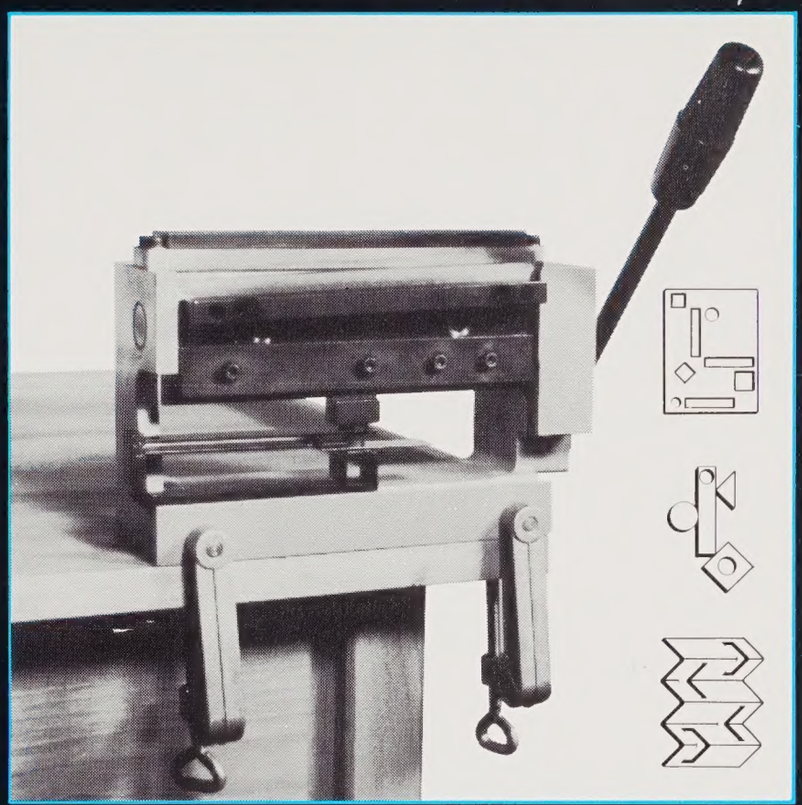

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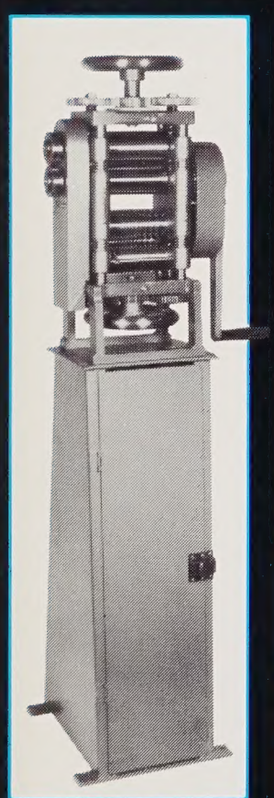

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○ 4.5 mm, 5.5, 6.5, 8.5, 10.0, 12.0
□ 6×6 mm, 8×8, 10×10, 12×12
▭ 4×12

DIMENSIONS:
3" deep, 7" high, 10" wide

PRICE:

Complete with all Hole Punches and Bending Punches	**$1050.00**
Only with Bending Punches	**$ 495.00**
Round Punches	**$ 55.00**
Square Punches	**$ 75.00**

JOHN FREI CUSTOM WORKBENCH—The finest jeweler workbench you can buy. Additional custom variations available. It is 38" high, 46" wide, 25" deep, and weighs 180-200 lbs.

Maple $750.00
Oak $895.00

DURSTON MINI MILL—60 mm (2.35") of flat, 4 sizes of wire, 3 sizes of ½ round wire in a convenient, compact, quality rolling mill. It comes with one side roll. It is 9" high, 11" wide, 5" deep, and weighs 38 lbs.
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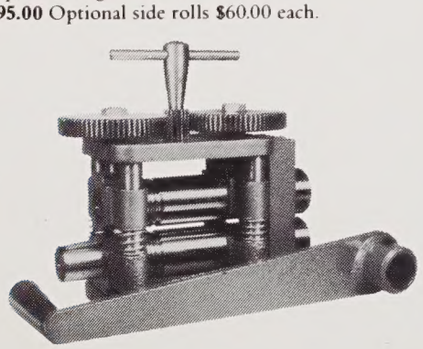

All our rolling mills come with a 2 year guarantee against defects in parts and workmanship.

Prices are subject to change without any notice.
November 1987

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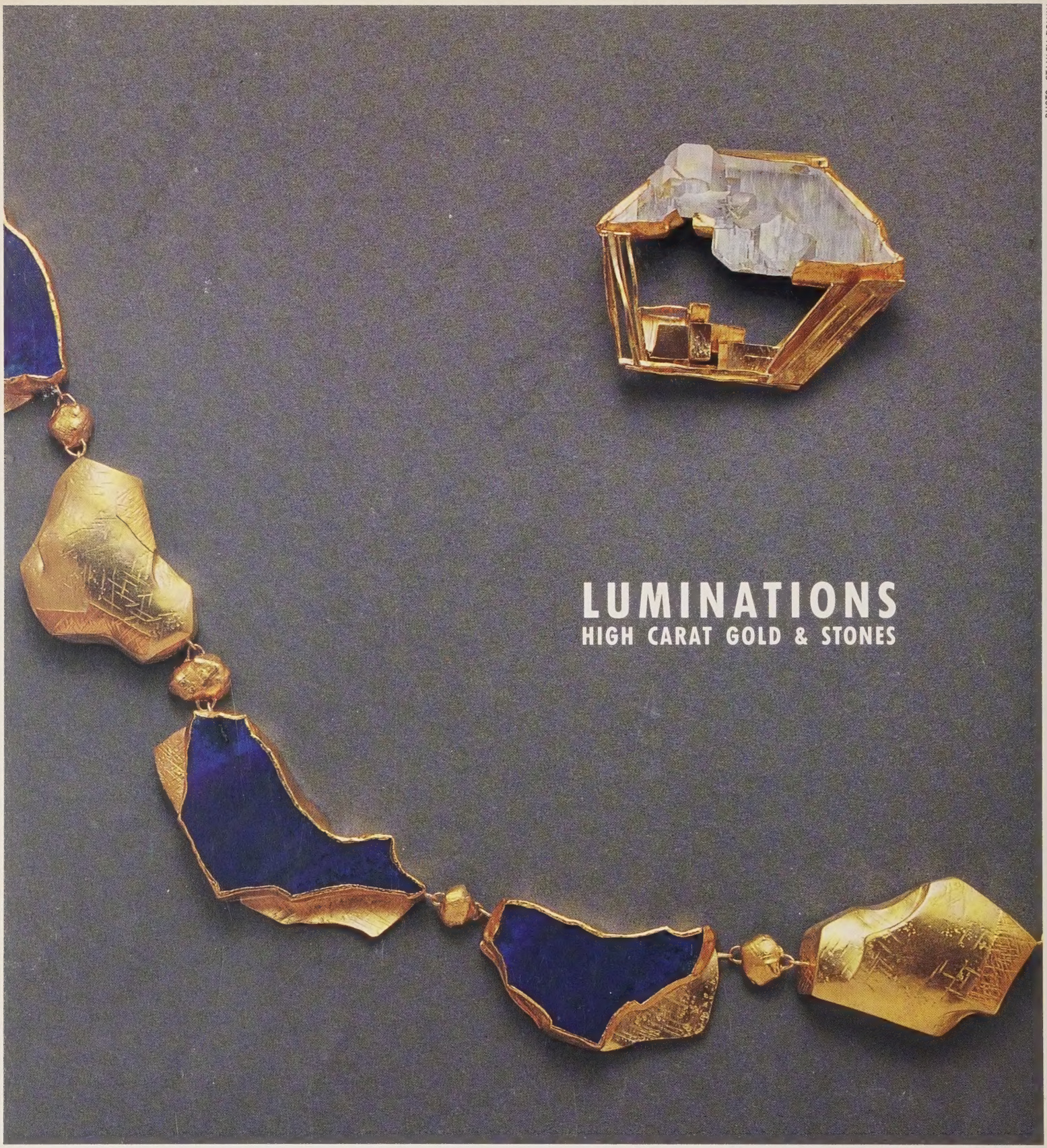

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